THE Nation.

GRASS ROOTS RESEEDED

THE PANIC OF 2008
The Editors

NEWSPAPERS' RED INK
Eric Alterman

GETTING TO KNOW OBAMA
Gary Younge
Max Fraser
Amy Alexander

WEATHERED RADICALS
Maurice Isserman

SUITES vs. STREETS
LAURA FLANDERS

THE NEW DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZERS
MATT STOLLER

3 lbs.

FEBRUARY 11, 2008
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The Historical Society is proud to announce the publication of the first installment of the Burnham Electoral Archive, extensive data compiled by Walter Dean Burnham during his many years of research on American electoral behavior, in the December 2007 issue of *The Journal of the Historical Society*. The tables include electorate data for:

- U.S. Presidential Elections, 1788-2004
- U.S. Potential Electorate Estimates, 1788-2004

The issue also includes essays by Burnham and Thomas Ferguson that discuss the Burnham Electoral Archive project in detail and explain its singular importance for American electoral history.

If you join the Historical Society before 3/1/08 you will receive a free copy of this issue of the *Journal*:

www.bu.edu/historic/forms/ssub.html

The Burnham Electoral Archive and other articles are also available for purchase via the **Blackwell Synergy** web site:

www.blackwell-synergy.com/loi/jhis

Letters

Return of the Prodigal Son

Montpelier, Vt.
Welcome back, Stuart Klawans ["Film," Jan. 28]. I don't know where you've been, but I've missed you. With the issue that arrived in today's mail, I've resumed reading *The Nation* from back to front.
Erica Garfin

Vote Your Heart Out

Our January 7/14 "Election '08" editorial outlining the strengths (and weaknesses) of the Democratic candidates but not making an endorsement drew sighs from a trickle of Edwards and Obama supporters and howls from a tsunami of Kucinich loyalists, who flung epithets like "cowards!," "sell-out," "weak," "shame on you," "cowardly surrender." They opined that we were "duped and cowed," "setting a bad example" and "behaving like the MSM." Some readers found the editorial to their liking. —The Editors

Iowa City
Kudos for endorsing a progressive movement instead of an individual candidate! A group of progressives held a "Caucus of the Future: Direct Democracy in Action" in Des Moines on January 2-3. It's about building a movement independent of the political parties (more info at Iowa Counter-Caucus).
David Goodner

Gig Harbor, Wash.
The most balanced and perceptive piece on the election I've seen. Your emphasizing the need "to build the public support vital…for capturing the opportunity to transform the country" is paramount.
Bill Nerin

Indianola, Iowa
The Nation's well-thought-out editorial on this incredibly important election season includes some bracing statements for the birth of a "progressive insurgency." But you decline to make an endorsement. It seems to me that a more forthright stance is called for, especially in light of the powerful language you've chosen: "historic opportunity," "ferment in the air," "yearning for change," "resuscitation of America's most inspired dreams of justice and equality" and "the kindling is in place." Why not just come out of your cautious shell and endorse a candidate? One more thing: why the cover portrait of the two mainstream media darlings when, I would wager, many readers are fed up with being force-fed those two?
Heidi De Young

Eastern, Ky.
So you've examined all the candidates and found Dennis Kucinich to be most closely aligned with your magazine's values. No surprise there. Time after time I hear people, organizations and publications say Dennis represents their positions but isn't electable. If everyone who agreed with him would simply vote for him or give him an endorsement, he wouldn't just be electable, he'd be unstoppable.

How about showing a little courage? The kind of courage Dennis shows every time he stands up to the political and corporate machines that try to silence him. Come on, *Nation*, walk your talk!
Morgaine Swann

Not Just Bad for the Jews—Bad for All

Rockville, Md.
Eric Alterman has it right! Jews like Russ Feingold, who actually represent what a majority of Jews believe, are marginalized while AIPAC-loving neocons like Joe Lieberman are treated like they represent mainstream Jewish views ["The Liberal Media," Jan. 7/14]. My parents are Holocaust survivors. What family we have live in Israel, and they work for *peace*! The Israeli press does a far, far better job of covering the differing points of view than our corporate media do. The media here are so co-opted, I have to e-mail my cousins to find out what Israelis really think.
Sue Cohen

Ellicott City, Md.
Eric Alterman hits right on the money. That the likes of Richard Perle, Nor-

letters@thenation.com

(continued on page 28)

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The Panic of 2008

On Monday, January 21, when the US stock markets were closed for Martin Luther King Day, world markets took a bad stumble. The next morning, as our markets were about to open, the Federal Reserve took the rare step of cutting the interest rate under its direct control a deep three-quarters of a point. What was rare about the cut was not only its size—triple the quarter-point moves that were typical over the past decade—but its timing, a week ahead of a normal policy meeting at which the Fed was nearly certain to cut rates. Such intermeeting moves are very unusual. Clearly, the cut was intended to have a dramatic psychological effect. The Fed's earlier rate cuts since last summer left the markets unimpressed and screaming for more; maybe this one will do the trick. And no doubt there's more to come.

EDITORIAL

Although real-world economic indicators have been softening for well over a year, they're far from collapsing. Yes, the housing market has been heading south for the better part of two years, and the economy produced a minimal 18,000 new jobs in December. But those things alone weren't enough to cause the central bankers to push the panic button. Plainly they were worried that the turmoil that had afflicted the financial markets ever since the subprime crisis broke out last summer was threatening to do serious damage to the real economy.

The cynical interpretation of events would be that the Fed is acting to rescue its most cherished constituency, Wall Street, which has had a pretty rough go of it lately after about twenty-five years of raking it in. This isn't wholly untrue, but tragically, Wall Street holds the rest of us hostage. Were the financial markets to seize up, the economy would go down the drain. That's not always true of the stock market, which often dances to its own delusional music, but it's very true of the credit markets, because they provide crucial day-to-day funding for businesses large and small. The Fed is trying to keep that credit flowing.

It's not only our economy that's at risk. For months, it was fashionable to say that the rest of the world had "decoupled" from the United States; a recession here wouldn't necessarily affect the economies of Europe or Asia. But the idea that the rest of the world could escape the influence of the United States— which despite the erosion of its dominance over the last several decades is still responsible for about a quarter of the world's output—never made much sense, and the global stock selloff was an acknowledgment of that reality.

Just how stark is the reality? Doommongers are ominously predicting the worst downturn since the 1930s. Maybe. But with the Fed cutting interest rates this aggressively, and Washington almost certain to concoct a large stimulus program, a more likely outcome would be a recession followed by a year or more of stagnation. It's going to take time to work off the glut of new houses and the overhang of bad debts.

How dire things will get depends in large part on the makeup of that stimulus program. Size alone doesn't matter. If it's just tax rebates skewed to the upper brackets and business tax breaks, as the Bush Administration wants, it's not going to help all that much. (Regardless of any tax cuts, why would businesses invest if the economic outlook stinks?) Money must be gotten into the hands of those most in need of it, who are also those most likely to spend it: poor and lower-middle-income Americans. And a moratorium on foreclosures is essential to minimize suffering while a longer-term solution to the housing mess is worked out. Sad to say, though, it's hard to imagine our President signing such a humane and sensible bill.

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NEWS & ANALYSIS

Barbara Ehrenreich: Desperately Seeking Stimulus

Katha Pollitt: Open Letter From American Feminists

Jessica Valenti: Sexist Hell Freezes Over

CAMPAIGN '08

Complete coverage

RADIONATION

Bob Moser on GOP chaos

NATION POLL

Is Giuliani finished?

Viva la Restauración

Las Vegas

Like many structures in Las Vegas, the angular, ultramodern Rancho High School on the city's working-class northeast side looks like it was designed, built and air-dropped onto the desert sometime last week. On Saturday, January 19, at 11 AM, the building played host to five Democratic precinct caucuses, the first of their kind in the state's history.

In 2006 the Democrats, looking to capitalize on electoral opportunities out West and to diversify the early electorate, granted Nevada a coveted early spot on the calendar. But since the party originally intended that Nevada precede New Hampshire, the state couldn't stage a primary without threatening the tender ego of Granite Staters. So the DNC decided to import the complicated Iowa caucus model instead. (The state has had caucuses in the past, countywide and late in the cycle, but they were very sparsely attended.) Jayson Sime, who helped run the Iowa caucuses in 2004, moved to Las Vegas a year ago to start building the infrastructure from scratch to make it all work. "It's like planning 1,763 weddings," he told me, "and they all have to go off at the same time."

COMMENT

Three precincts were supposed to be caucusing in the cafeteria, but instead there was chaos. Confused crowds surrounded several large tables strewn with registration sheets and preference cards. A black woman named Violet Dorn sat at the middle table, festooned with Hillary stickers and lording over the official registration papers. Across the table, a black man in a white-collared shirt and suit with an Obama button stood berating her. "Stop telling people this table is only for Hillary!" he shouted. "You cannot do that!" A small wrestling match commenced over the paperwork. Then a white man approached. "What kind of politics is this?" he yelled. "Is this the politics of change?" His shirt featured a picture of Obama and the words HE'S BLACK AND I'M PROUD.

Meanwhile, the caucus attendees circled and paced, looking for some sign of order and finding none. Hobbling behind a walker, one woman explained that she'd come with fellow residents of a nearby senior citizen center looking to vote, but their names hadn't been on the rolls. (That shouldn't have stopped her, since the caucuses offered same-day registration.) Eventually she was allowed to caucus. Some people left; others just watched and steamed, frustrated and powerless. The confusion stretched on, twenty minutes, half an hour…

"This is so unorganized," one man exclaimed. "This is so unorganized!"

"Well, it doesn't help when you yell!" answered a woman in a Clinton shirt.

"You call this organized? It's a mess!"

The atmosphere grew more panicked as everyone realized no one was in charge. Because of my press credentials, people mistook me for a party official, asking where they were supposed to go, what to do if their name wasn't on the rolls and which precinct they belonged in. I took to looking up precinct locations on my phone. The room seemed to teeter on the precipice of a general melee. Volunteers scurried off to call for backup. I phoned the state Democratic Party and told them they had to

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send someone to Rancho High School immediately.

About fifteen minutes later, Andres Ramirez, the party's Hispanic outreach director, showed up. With great effort and lots of shouting from a tabletop, he miraculously managed to get everything running smoothly. Afterward, he told me he'd been prompted to come by live coverage of the debacle on television.

Ultimately, much of the chaos and rancor resulted from Dorn's dual role as temporary caucus chair and precinct captain for Hillary Clinton. As temporary caucus chair she was the only official party presence there, charged with administering the sign-in in a nonbiased manner and making sure everything ran smoothly. As a precinct captain for Hillary, her job was to deliver votes for the candidate. Dorn conflated her two roles, telling attendees they could sign in only if they were supporting Hillary, while prechecking the preference cards she dispensed with a mark next to Clinton. This (understandably) sent Obama supporters into hysteria. After the caucus, Dorn admitted that "there was some confusion" on her part as to her role. Subsequent conversations with caucus-goers and campaign organizers convinced me that disorder was commonplace: the smooth functioning of the caucuses depend almost entirely on the competence and good faith of the volunteer temporary chair.

The Democratic campaigns in Nevada were far more orderly than caucus day but no less contentious. Although the tone was sharpening, the two front-runners seemed to be converging on rhetorical rhythm. Clinton now not only presents herself through the lens of change but at a rally in a junior high school on the eve of the caucus, she peppered her speech with numerous allusions to "hopes" and "dreams" and made Obama-esque nods to bipartisanship: "It wasn't a Republican problem or a Democratic problem," she said of her advocacy for better healthcare for wounded veterans. "It was an American problem." Obama in turn has dialed his speech down about three notches on the rhetorical abstraction scale, stuffing in more laundry list–style issue specifics in the Clinton vein. And Michelle Obama, in introducing her husband at a rally at Rancho, spent the entire time stressing his "experience"—as an organizer, a civil rights lawyer and a state legislator.

In the absence of substantive ideological differences and rhetorical contrasts, what's left to divide the two candidates and their supporters is more or less identity, and the appeals and attacks of the candidates themselves. All politics are tribal to a certain extent, but the degree to which this is the case in the current Democratic primary is striking: young hipsters favor Obama; retirees, Hillary Clinton; black men, Obama; white women, Clinton; and so on. These demographic differences were apparent at campaign rallies and caucuses alike, and were subsequently borne out by Nevada entrance polling. Among actual everyday voters, though, these affiliations are mild, marginal preferences. Even Violet Dorn said that while she was supporting Clinton because Obama "doesn't have enough battle scars," she had favorable impressions of the man.

Before Nevada, the big demographic group that seemed to be in play were the state's Latinos, but it was never really close. Clinton assiduously cultivated the endorsement and support of

Noted.

IDs AND I-DON'Ts: On January 9, in a suit brought by Democratic politicians and advocacy groups like the Indianapolis NAACP, the Supreme Court heard opening arguments on the constitutionality of Indiana's voter ID law, one of the most restrictive in the country. There are twenty-seven states with stricter identification requirements than mandated by the 2002 **Help America Vote Act**. Indiana and two other states—Florida and Georgia—require voters to show a photo ID at the polls or else cast a provisional ballot that will be counted only if they can produce ID later. Similar laws were proposed in twenty-seven state legislatures last year.

As few as 1.2 percent and as many as 10 percent of eligible voters lack a photo ID. One study found that one in eight registered voters did not have the identification necessary to vote in Indiana. The groups affected all trend Democratic: poor, minority, elderly, young and first-time voters are less likely to have valid IDs. Even the more conservative figure, 1.2 percent, would mean that about 2 million voters nationwide don't have photo IDs, more than enough to paint a few statehouses red or swing a close national election.

CHILE'S TRUTH-TELLER: The world of investigative journalism lost one of its most respected and effective figures January 13, when **Patricia Verdugo** died at age 61 after a long struggle with cancer. Verdugo dedicated her prolific and fearless career to exposing massive human rights violations in Chile, which included the kidnapping, torture and murder of her father, a centrist union leader, in 1976. One of her many books, *Los Zarpazos del Puma*—published in English as *Chile, Pinochet and the Caravan of Death*—was a landmark bestseller in Chile. "I don't offend," Verdugo said when Pinochet's officers interrogated her about another book she wrote, *Burned Alive*, on the murder by fire of Rodrigo Rojas, a teenage protester who had grown up in exile in Washington. "I report the facts as they happened."

PETER KORNBLUH AND JOHN DINGES

AMERICA'S LIARS: That the Bush Administration lied on the road to Iraq is an established fact. But just how frequently and outrageously it did so is now, finally, a matter of public record—thanks to the researchers at the **Center for Public Integrity**, who have assembled a database of 935 false statements made by Bush, Cheney, Rice, Rumsfeld et al. in the two years following 9/11. The database, available at www.publicintegrity.org/WarCard, is fully searchable. Yellowcake uranium? **Judith Miller**? Niger documents? It's all there, along with ample evidence that the truth was out there too. As such, **The War Card** is an indictment not just of the Bush Administration but also of the media that bought the lies—hook, line and sinker.

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nearly every Latino elected official in the state. And, of course, she had the endorsement of Bill Clinton, who continues to be enormously popular among Latinos and served in Nevada as a nonstop attack dog. The ex-President's ubiquity seemed to signal a return on the part of the senator's campaign to its original message, rooted in the promise of restoring a bygone era.

Many Latino voters I spoke with in Las Vegas were supporting Senator Clinton out of something akin to brand loyalty, without necessarily knowing a whole lot about her record or positions, similar to the way Chicagoans will pull the lever for a Daley without necessarily knowing what his proposals are for the city budget or parks department. In the case of the Clintons it's an entirely rational heuristic: things were a lot better in the 1990s, so why not give it another shot?

But this machine-style loyalty can have perverse effects. Before I happened upon the chaos in the cafeteria, I spent some time talking to people in the two more orderly precinct caucuses in the adjoining gym. Ricardo Ramirez, 24, was sitting in the bleachers with his mother, Ramona Hernandez, holding Hillary signs. He shrugged nervously when I asked him why he was supporting Clinton, but his mother told me in Spanish that she was there because she wanted "a change for my country." She told me she was concerned about the war, and when after a few minutes I was about to leave, she tugged my sleeve and said there was "one more issue" she felt strongly about: people without papers.

"They just come here to work, and they suffer," she said. She told the tale of her 18-year-old grandson, born in Mexico but was brought to the States by his mother when he was 1. Last year he and two others were arrested for robbing a man of his sneakers. He pleaded guilty, and a few weeks later Immigration and Customs Enforcement showed up at his door, cuffed him and deported him. He's now in Jalisco, in a country he's never lived in in his sentient life. "He doesn't know anyone there," Hernandez said, her voice shaky, her eyes welling with tears.

Just one month ago at an event in Tipton, Iowa, Hillary Clinton was asked what should be done with undocumented immigrants who commit a crime. "We have to deport them immediately," she said. "No questions asked. No legal process. Put them on a plane. Send them back to wherever they came from." I didn't remember that specific quote at the time, but I did ask Hernandez if she thought electing Clinton would help her grandson.

"Eso esperamos," she said. That's what we hope.

Viva la restauración.

CHRISTOPHER HAYES

Christopher Hayes is The Nation*'s Washington editor.*

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

One Possible Explanation For Surveys Showing That Rudy Giuliani May Not Win His Own State

Familiarity with him means dreading
The day that Rudy's hand's upon the rudder,
For he's vindictive, credit-hogging, petty—
The Bully Dork. To know him is to shudder.

Subprime Obama

Last year, forty-three states reported increased home foreclosure rates. Nevada led the way for eleven consecutive months; in Clark County, which includes Las Vegas, nearly one in twenty homes is in foreclosure. Whole blocks have been foreclosed in Chicago. Nationwide, rates are nearing Depression-era highs—ravaging working- and middle-class neighborhoods that fell prey to the soft sell and outright chicanery of predatory lenders in the heyday of the housing boom. These lenders have targeted the most vulnerable—black and Latino borrowers have been twice as likely to receive subprime loans as whites; female homeowners, 30 percent more likely than male; black women, five times more likely than white men.

COMMENT

As the subprime mortgage debacle drives a recession that threatens financial markets around the world, the Democratic presidential candidates are pushing plans to address the crisis. John Edwards and Hillary Clinton are pledging substantial federal resources to stabilize the mortgage market and intervene on behalf of borrowers. Barack Obama's proposal is tepid by comparison, short on aggressive government involvement and infused with conservative rhetoric about fiscal responsibility. As he has done on domestic issues like healthcare, job creation and energy policy, Obama is staking out a position to the right of not only populist Edwards but Clinton as well.

Edwards's plan includes a mandatory moratorium on foreclosures, a freeze on rising interest rates for at least seven years, federal subsidies to help homeowners keep up with payments and restructure loans, and explicit measures to rein in predatory lenders and regulate the financial sector. Clinton's plan is weaker—a voluntary moratorium, a shorter freeze, less commitment to new regulations—but she has promised $30 billion in federal aid to help reeling homeowners and communities.

Only Obama has not called for a moratorium and interest-rate freeze. Though he has been a proponent of mortgage fraud legislation in the Senate, he has remained silent on further financial regulations. And much like his broader economic stimulus package, Obama's foreclosure plan mostly avoids direct government spending in favor of a tax credit for homeowners, which amounts to about $500 on average, beyond which only certain borrowers would be eligible for help from an additional fund.

"One advantage to the tax credit is that there's no moral hazard involved," one of Obama's economic advisers explains. "There's no sense in which you're rewarding someone for taking too big a risk. If you lied about your income in order to get a bigger mortgage, then you're not qualified. Do you really want to give a subsidy to the guy who wasn't prudent?" Obama has used similar language on the campaign trail. "Innocent home-

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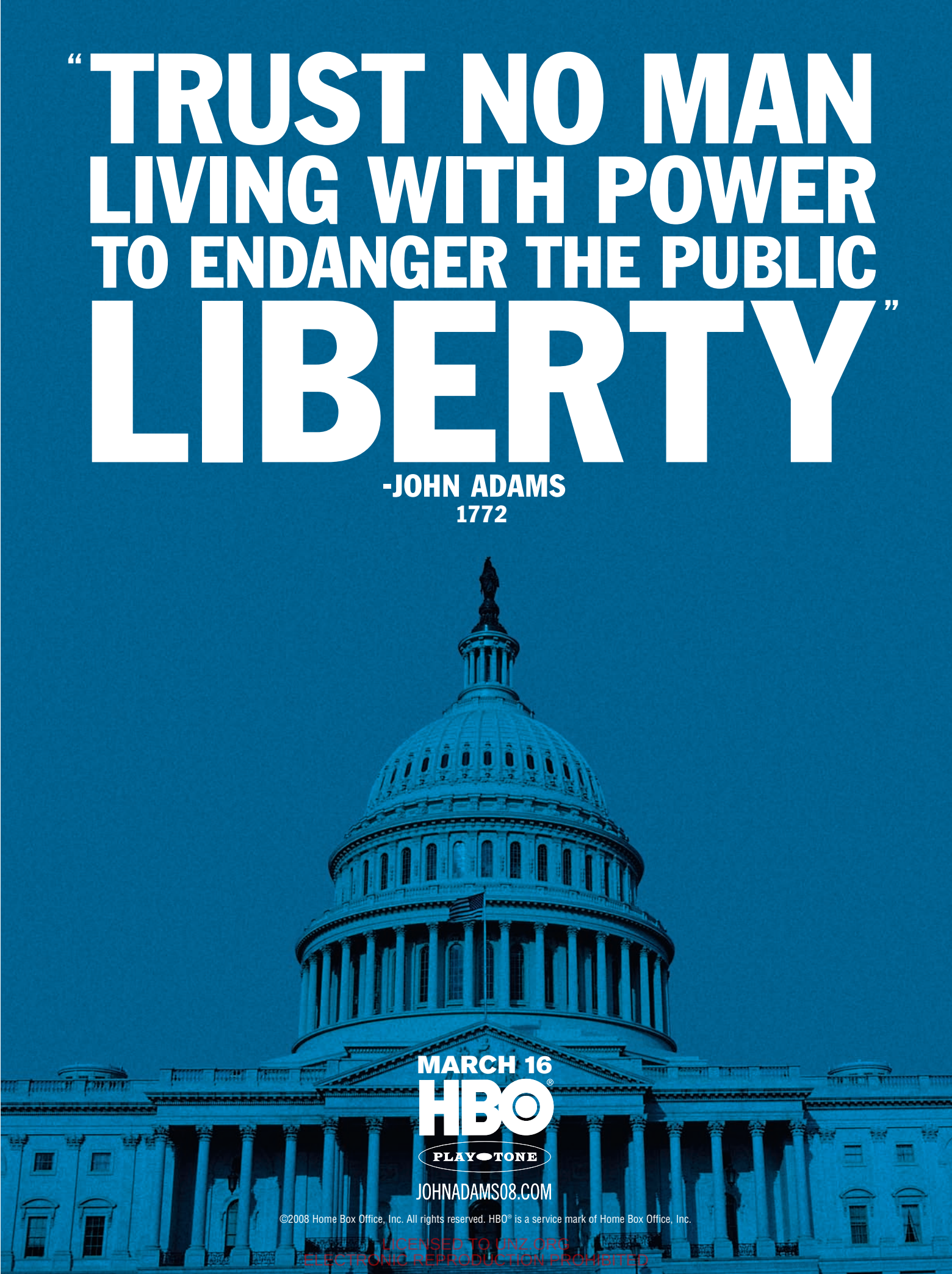

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owners," he has promised, those "responsible" borrowers "facing foreclosure through no fault of their own," would get help restructuring their loans. But no such luck for those "claiming income they didn't have" or "lying to get mortgages."

"There's been less emphasis from the Obama campaign on the really dysfunctional role of the financial industry in the subprime mess," says Josh Bivens of the Economic Policy Institute. "Edwards and Clinton talk much more about regulation of the financial industry going forward, and to the extent that blame is placed, they tend to place it on the lenders for steering people into loans they couldn't afford."

Obama's disappointing foreclosure plan stems from the centrist politics of his three chief economic advisers and his campaign's ties to Wall Street institutions opposed to increased financial regulation. David Cutler and Jeffrey Liebman are both Harvard economists who served in the Clinton Administration, and they work on market-oriented solutions to social welfare issues. Cutler advocates improving healthcare through financial incentives; Liebman, the partial privatization of Social Security.

Austan Goolsbee, an economist at the University of Chicago who calls himself a "centrist market economist," has been most directly involved with crafting Obama's subprime agenda. In a column last March in the *New York Times*, Goolsbee disputed whether "subprime lending was the leading cause of foreclosure problems," touted its benefits for credit-poor minority borrowers and warned that "regulators should be mindful of the potential downside in tightening [the mortgage market] too much." In October, no less a conservative luminary than George Will devoted a whole column in the *Washington Post* to saluting Goolsbee's "nuanced understanding" of traditional Democratic issues like globalization and income inequality and concluded that he "seems to be the sort of fellow—amiable, empirical, and reasonable—you would want at the elbow of a Democratic president, if such there must be."

Robert Pollin, an economist at the University of Massachussets, believes "these three advisers generally reflect Obama's very moderate economic program, similar to Clintonism." Wall Street apparently has come to a similar conclusion. Obama had received nearly $10 million in contributions from the finance, insurance and real estate sector through October, and he's second among presidential candidates of either party in money raised from commercial banks, trailing only Clinton. Goldman Sachs, which made $6 billion from devalued mortgage securities in the first nine months of 2007, is Obama's top contributor. When asked if Obama would hold these financial institutions accountable for losses incurred by homeowners and investors, his campaign refused to comment.

But tax credits and continued deregulation won't solve the mortgage crisis, which threatens to dispossess more than 2 million homeowners this year. "There's no evidence that an unregulated market is going to be a stable market," Pollin says. "The unstable mortgage market is one indication of that. This is not anything new. What is new is that you have a serious presidential candidate who isn't really talking about it and doesn't have advisers that are prepared to deal with it."

If Obama is serious about his community organizing roots, then he would do well to take a lesson from groups like the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition and ACORN, which are calling for a moratorium on foreclosures of a year or longer and for the creation of a massive government loan agency on the scale of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation of the 1930s. "We need some serious federal government intervention to restructure loans, not repossess homes," says the Rev. Jesse Jackson. "Because it's not just the borrowers anymore, it's the economy itself. We're in for a very difficult economic season." MAX FRASER

Max Fraser, a journalist, directs The Nation Institute's intern program.

Comix Nation

by STEVE BRODNER

WRITERS' Strike SPREADS: PUBLIC figures WING IT
G.W. BUSH: "I know I'm relevant. REMEMBER all that BRUSH? Do you realize HOW MUCH BRUSH I've CLEARED?"
DICK CHENEY: "The EVIL is out there! They're EVERYWHERE! They ARE probably LIVING in my BODY."
ROGER CLEMENS: "It WAS GATORADE ... INJECTED in the tush."
BEN BERNANKE: "This COULD be a DIET for the ECONOMY. SO IT'S NO CARBS for a while. Think of it that WAY."
STEVE BRODNER

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Black Women Talk Barack

COMMENT

The other day, my daughter announced her support of Senator Hillary Clinton's bid for the Democratic presidential nomination.

I asked why, and she answered, "It would be awesome to have a woman President." (She is 8 years old.) When I asked why not Senator Barack Obama, she paused, a slight crease developing between her eyebrows:

"Oh, I don't know, Mom. I just think it would be better to have a woman President." With that, I said something encouraging about her growing interest in presidential politics but didn't press her on her choice.

My daughter's nascent political interest—and her stated preference for Clinton—appears to be influenced by her budding sense of girl power more than black power. In this respect her preference defies the new conventional wisdom: in the black community, post–civil rights era blacks go for Barack Obama, while old heads support Hillary Clinton.

The week of the New Hampshire primary, I contacted several African-Americans to sound them out on this. The one clear consensus was that black voters are pleasantly surprised to find themselves at a historic moment in which a window is open to elect a candidate who may be able to move the needle significantly on matters that for too long have been ignored. But my conversations also reflected a distinct generational divide, with some interesting contours.

From her home in Los Angeles, Tananarive Due, a novelist, expressed unwavering enthusiasm for Obama. Like me, she is in her early 40s and straddles the line between the baby boom and post–civil rights eras.

"This is like a big family squabble, only more painful," said Due, the daughter of 1960s civil rights activists John and Patricia Stephens Due. Tananarive, author with her mother of *Freedom in the Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights*, decided to "come out" about her political views only after seeing Obama speak last May at the First AME Church at the edge of South Central Los Angeles. She was so moved, Due said, that she returned later to the church, got a videotape of Obama's speech and spent hours transcribing it. She described her abiding belief in his candidacy in a post on her blog, which made the rounds among black writers and journalists in the days after the New Hampshire primary.

Due is mindful, she said, of the high emotions that will likely play an important part in black voters' decisions. And as she sees it, for some black Americans fear is the biggest influence on that front—the feelings of self-doubt and the deep fears born of long, grim, generational memory. "When you have been beaten down for as long as blacks have been, it is hard not to be afraid," Due told me. "Afraid that voting for Obama will be a wasted vote. Afraid that someone will try to harm him or his family, the closer he gets."

That outlook has been reflected in news stories focusing on black voters in South Carolina, a state where as many as 50 percent of all voters expected to cast ballots in the January 26 Democratic primary will be African-American. Yet missing from the mainstream coverage is a full exploration of the "fear" factor that Due identified, and that I similarly contemplated after learning of my daughter's preferred Democratic candidate: the strong aversion that some blacks may have to the concept of risk in general and as it applies to Obama's candidacy in particular. While recent polls in South Carolina show that black voters now overwhelmingly support Obama, anecdotal evidence does seem to indicate that older blacks, particularly black women, support Clinton because they believe she is more "electable."

On the other hand, Patricia Stephens Due, 68, is an "older voter" with no fear: like her daughter, she supports Obama. "It is our time now. We have to take care of our own," said Due, who was a student organizer in the Congress of Racial Equality in the 1960s, from her home in Florida. "And this nonsense about Senator Obama not being 'black enough' is just that—nonsense. I know that some of us are afraid, and many of us carry the wounds of our past on the inside rather than on the outside," said Due, who was nearly blinded by a state trooper who hit her in the face with a tear gas canister at a civil rights rally. "I understand the fears, but we have to get over them. This candidate cannot prevail if we don't show our support."

Then there are black women who say they support Clinton's candidacy, not from fear but because they like the New York Senator's legislative and advocacy record. Victoria Rowell, a foster care advocate, writer and actress in Beverly Hills, is in her late 40s. The author of a memoir, *The Women Who Raised Me*, that describes her childhood and young adulthood in the foster care system, Rowell supports Clinton, she said, based on her life experience as a black woman who grew up "in the system." "My support of Hillary does not mean I don't think Barack is capable, only that I think Senator Clinton has the experience and track record of working on issues that are important to me," Rowell told me.

Lester Spence, a Johns Hopkins political scientist, said to me recently that he is skeptical of any attempt to describe in shorthand the influence of black voters' personal histories, and their generational memory, on their choice in the Democratic primary. Spence cautions that the archetypal "black woman voter" does not exist. Still, by his review of the poll data—information he admits can have its limitations—Spence believes it is probably accurate to say that the segments of black voters most likely to go for Hillary Clinton are older women and working-class women who hold fondly to the notion of bringing back President Bill Clinton.

Then he mentioned something that instantly, viscerally resonated with me, as the mother of an 8-year-old black girl and a 4-year-old black boy:

"If that voter is a black woman who is a bit younger, who is working hard to keep it together, and especially if she has sons, her support will be for Barack. Especially if she has sons," Spence said.

"Because, let's be real: the most at-risk population in America is not girls, black or white, and it certainly isn't white women. It is black boys, and the mothers of black boys are going to go all out for Barack Obama."

AMY ALEXANDER

Amy Alexander is a 2008 Alfred Knobler Journalism Fellow at The Nation Institute. She is currently at work on a book about race and the media.

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HOW I LOST MY JOB AND FOUND HAPPINESS

By Edward Sorel

WHY DIDN'T SOMEONE TELL ME HE HATED FUTURA?
WHEN I WAS 26 I LANDED A JOB AS ART DIRECTOR AT CBS PAYING $175 A WEEK...BIG BUCKS IN 1955. THE ONLY TROUBLE WAS THAT MR. GOLDEN, MY BOSS, DIDN'T THINK MUCH OF MY LAYOUTS.
HE WOULDN'T FIRE ME, BUT HE NEVER INVITED ME TO HAVE DRINKS ON FRIDAYS WITH THE OTHERS. ONE FRIDAY A CO-WORKER URGED ME TO COME ALONG. I DID.
Hi.
WHEN I SAW GOLDEN'S FACE I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE. AS SOON AS I COULD, I SAID I HAD A PREVIOUS DATE AND RUSHED OUT, GRABBING A COAT THAT WASN'T MINE.
I WAS HALFWAY HOME BEFORE I NOTICED THAT THE SLEEVES ON MY COAT WERE TWO INCHES SHORT. IN THE POCKETS I FOUND A PAIR OF ELEGANT LEATHER GLOVES.
I HAD TAKEN GOLDEN'S COAT! NOW HE WOULD HAVE TO SPEND THE WEEKEND WEARING MY COAT, WHICH WOULD COME DOWN TO HIS ANKLES
AS I LAY AWAKE THINKING OF MY SCREW-UP, I SUDDENLY REMEMBERED THAT INSIDE THE POCKETS OF MY COAT WERE DOZENS OF EMPTY PEANUT SHELLS!
ON MONDAY HIS SECRETARY BROUGHT IN MY COAT, SAYING, "I BELIEVE THIS IS YOURS." THEN SHE WHISPERED THAT I HAD BETTER START LOOKING FOR ANOTHER JOB.
I DIDN'T. INSTEAD, I DECIDED TO BECOME A FREELANCE ILLUSTRATOR. IT WORKED OUT FINE. WITHOUT A 9 TO 5 JOB YOU CAN TAKE NAPS IN THE AFTER-NOON. AND IF YOU MARRY A FREELANCER, LIFE CAN BE VERY PLEASANT.
E.S.

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Eric Alterman

Wall Street to Daily Papers: 'Drop Dead'

It's just a coincidence that the essay "Does the News Matter to Anyone Anymore?" by the impresario of *The Wire*, David Simon, appeared in the *Washington Post* the same day news broke of the top editor of the *Los Angeles Times* having been forced out over a refusal to make further budget cuts. Virtually every major magazine—as if by divine decree—has run a David Simon profile recently, and in each one the former *Sun* veteran has eloquently bemoaned the state of contemporary newspapering. And the departure of James O'Shea from the *LA Times* marks the fourth time in less than three years that either the top editor or the publisher has "quit" rather than make budget cuts demanded by the owner.

What was different about the latest *LA Times* departure was that it took place not under the much-detested Tribune Company ownership but the would-be savior of the *Times*, entrepreneur Samuel Zell. No less odd is that, according to the Tribune's Phil Rosenthal, O'Shea's departure had been planned about a week before the announcement, yet nobody at the *Times* bothered to come up with some corporate-friendly spin. According to the *New York Times*, Nancy Sullivan, a spokeswoman for the *LA Times*, simply said, "I don't have any comment for you." It's as if newspaper owners have given up caring to explain themselves. "This is the way of the world," they're telling us. "Get used to it."

Regarding Simon's newspaper critique, what is odd—at least if you're a fan of *The Wire*, and I defer to no one in that department—is that it mixes up problems with no relation to one another. I don't like that ambitious yuppie on the city desk any more than anyone, but what's he got to do with the budget cuts that are destroying the paper's institutional memory? And other Simon complaints about what's happened to the *Baltimore Sun*—where he worked and upon whose woes *The Wire* focuses—do not strike me as relevant to the industry's current conundrum. Perhaps his editors were overly obsessed with prizes, but since when have editors not been obsessed with prizes? Perhaps they did force him to oversimplify complex social phenomena, but again, when was that not journalistically the case?

I don't begrudge Simon his hobbyhorses. I have my own, primarily the business's refusal to stand up to—or even acknowledge—the war on press freedom the Bush Administration and its allies have been waging since they came to power seven years ago. But the guys who run these newspapers are focused on one thing only, and that's survival. You might be, too, if you were faced with facts like these:

§ The combined market value of independent, publicly traded US newspaper publishers has fallen by 42 percent in the past three years.

§ The Washington Post Company, with circulation down 14 percent since 2000, now calls itself "an education and media company," as the balance of its profits comes from its purchase of the Stanley Kaplan educational testing business.

§ Advertising—the industry's lifeblood—is also in rapid decline, moving to where it is cheaper and more efficiently targeted on the Internet. Spending for print ads in newspapers fell 9 percent last year, with the fall rapidly accelerating in the third quarter.

§ Newspapers are receiving a declining share of Internet advertising as well. While online ad sales surged 26 percent to more than $15 billion in the first nine months of 2007, according to Pricewaterhouse Coopers, for the first time newspapers no longer received the largest share.

§ The time Americans spend reading newspapers has fallen to just fifteen hours per month.

§ Fully 23 percent of Americans cite the Internet as their main source of election news. And though 26 percent name newspapers as their source, that figure has fallen by more than half since 1996.

§ Young people in particular do not read newspapers and have no interest in acquiring the habit. Daily readership for people under 30 now stands at barely one in five.

§ A recent Goldman Sachs analysis predicted a 7.9 percent decline in ad revenue this year, and cut its earnings forecast for all newspaper-based companies in 2008. Paper costs are going up 11 percent to boot.

Even though profits remain high at almost all these papers, the sad fact is that virtually no one is interested in staying in the business for business reasons anymore. The cautionary tales are too powerful. When, for instance, Wall Street lost confidence in the Knight Ridder chain in 2005, its sale netted only one bidder: the smaller McClatchy Company chain. At the time, McClatchy CEO Gary Pruitt wrote in the *Wall Street Journal* that the chain's $6.5 billion purchase price would have constituted "an unimaginable bargain only a few years ago." Since the takeover McClatchy has lost more than 82 percent of its market value. And it's hardly alone. In June 2005, Lee Enterprises paid $1.46 billion in cash to buy the Pulitzer newspaper chain. Lee's stock is worth barely a third of what it was before the purchase.

Nobody's got a good solution to this problem—at least not one that involves continued public, for-profit ownership of daily newspapers—but what is perhaps most depressing about the reaction of the industry has been its timid acquiescence to these trends. In James O'Shea's final remarks to the *LA Times* newsroom, he correctly identified "the biggest challenge" facing the industry: "to overcome this pervasive culture of defeat, the psychology of surrender that accepts decline as inevitable." The dude, alas, is dead-on. Newsmen and -women are supposed to go down fighting. As the great Molly Ivins observed not long before we lost her: budget cuts, buyout plans, it's as if the only agreed-upon solution to fight this deadly disease is "to commit suicide."

Not even the junkies on *The Wire* are that far gone… ■

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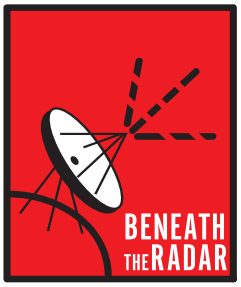
Gary Younge

Some Things Even Obama Can't Transcend

Charleston

I admit it. For a moment I believed. Walking down Sumter Street during Charleston's Martin Luther King Day parade, the overwhelmingly white coterie of Barack Obama volunteers chanted: "Obama '08! We're ready. Why wait?" Among them was a young man who was "so depressed" after Obama's New Hampshire defeat that he had dropped everything he'd been doing in Guatemala and flown back to help out. There was also an elderly woman from Florida who had read his book *Dreams From My Father* two weeks earlier and was so inspired she felt she needed to do something.

Local African-Americans lined the sidewalks, cheering encouragement. Obama's victory in Iowa had proved that a black candidacy was not a pipe dream. Now a significant number of white people had come to the parade calling for them to make common cause. And every now and then the volunteers went to the sidewalk, shook hands, handed out leaflets and even hugged the locals.



The Mississippi Freedom Summer it wasn't. But it was something. A moment. A political moment that produced hopeful human engagement. Within half an hour it had evaporated. The parade was over. The white volunteers would not talk to the media without approval, even to explain their excitement. When authorization came through for them to speak their minds, the guy from Guatemala gushed about the coming of a postracial America. Meanwhile, the black people went back to their homes in the poorest parts of town and waited for change.

It is easy to be cynical. But it is the potency and potential of these moments—as fleeting and fatuous as they may seem—that form the basis for much of Obama's appeal. He points out the ways America is riven and then calls on his audience to take the country to a higher level. Every time his multigenerational, multiracial crowds get together, it seems like they are creating a new reality from whole cloth. "In lines that stretched around schools and churches, in small towns and big cities," he told the jubilant crowds in Iowa, "you came together as Democrats, Republicans and independents to stand up and say that we are one nation, we are one people, and our time for change has come."

A few days later, at a conference on bipartisanship at the University of Oklahoma attended by Michael Bloomberg, Obama's victory dampened discussion of the New York mayor launching an independent presidential bid. "I believe [Obama] is demonstrating, in the support he is getting, that the American people share this concern about excessive partisanship," said Bob Graham, a former Democratic senator from Florida, who attended.

In and of itself, bipartisanship is a goal that is both inarguable and insubstantial. It is treated as a matter of orthodoxy that Americans crave a more bipartisan approach to national politics. But polls show that on issues they care about, just about half want politicians to seek solutions through compromise. Their ambivalence is not surprising. As a means to an end, bipartisanship makes sense. But as an end in itself, it is a hollow notion unless you define who you want to join forces with and why.

Nonetheless, it is not difficult to see why it has caught on as a campaign slogan in both parties. For the past seven years this country has been run on the basis of crude majoritarianism by a President brazen enough to treat 48 percent of the popular vote as an endorsement and 51 percent as an overwhelming mandate. George Bush did not create this partisan split; he inherited it, just as Al Gore would have if he had won the Supreme Court case in 2000. But while the split was broad, it was Bush who made it deep and rancorous by ramming through his neoconservative agenda and war.

The failure of this agenda, and the attendant collapse of America's self-confidence, made the case both for a more consensual political culture and against the current political class. The economy is tanking, the war is dragging, the country's international reputation is in tatters and the inability of Congress or the White House to do anything about it has given rise to despondency. But the partisanship in Washington that has disillusioned people is in fact "partysanship"—the support not of one idea or program over another but of one party over another. Democrats backed the war and have refused to stop its funding, impeach Bush or protect civil liberties because they believe that to do otherwise would be bad for the party, regardless of the country's interests.

While the Democratic Party's interests may at times coincide with that of the American people, they are clearly not synonymous. The party's raison d'être is to win elections, not to change America. Depending on the time, place and candidate, it may well stand for office but little else. The right understands these limits of electoral politics only too well. Its victories have ended in Washington, but they didn't start there and were not sustained there. The terrible truth about the past seven years is not that the country has been divided but that the wrong side has been winning. The right has fought for its agenda and has never been in doubt about who its enemy is.

It's high time the left did the same. Arguing for policies that eradicate poverty, confront racism and homophobia, tackle economic and gender inequality and corporate excess, normalize the status of millions of undocumented immigrants and address the ballooning prison-industrial complex is about being progressive, not divisive. It does, however, mean recognizing that divisions exist and that to resolve them we have to take sides and fight for our beliefs. Unity is not forged by fiat but by struggle. Candidates can talk about "transcending" race, gender, region and party all they like. But before we can talk sensibly about transcending difference, we must first transform the conditions that give these differences meaning. To get beyond race, for example, we must first get rid of racism. Then every day can be like Martin Luther King Day, and black people won't have to watch from the sidelines. ■

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The Democrats say they've changed—voters are being organized and turnout is rising. Could this be the year they finally let regular people play a real role in party politics?

For as long as I can remember, pundits and political reporters have bemoaned low voter turnout and attacked public apathy in elections. But given the paucity of avenues for popular engagement and the myriad ways regular people are cut out of the political process, the remarkable thing isn't how few Americans participate in elections. What's remarkable is how many do.

In the run-up to the 2004 election, Democratic voters seeking Kerry/Edwards yard signs called in to Air America Radio. Exasperated, they called the liberal radio network because they could find no signs at their local party offices (if they could find any local office). The candidates weren't campaigning in their states, and there was no useful information on the Kerry/Edwards website. After John Kerry conceded, the candidates gave high-minded speeches ("This fight has just begun…and we will be with you every step of the way," said John Edwards). But that very day, campaign offices closed, phones were disconnected and exhausted workers were scattered to the winds (some were still owed checks). The massive independent mobilization that thousands of volunteers had been part of evaporated too, as nonparty groups like America Coming Together (ACT) downsized. "Tony from Marin," a caller to *RadioNation*, told a typical story: "I traveled to Nevada at my own expense with a dozen friends to do something. In the eighteen months since, all the energy and air was let out of the balloon of activism, and I'm finding that now I'm on nobody's active list."

At the level of candidate selection, priority-setting and campaigns, the Democratic Party and its voters had effectively been delinked. The same thing happened the last time a Democrat captured the White House. Reaching voters through TV advertising and direct mail, Bill Clinton won by promising everything to everybody and proceeded to preside over a penthouse party: all top-floor suites, no staircase to the streets, more focused on mobilizing money than people. After 2004, Howard Dean pledged to change all that. Dean, who had tasted the possibilities of the grass- and netroots and caught a glimpse of the party's shambles during his bid for the nomination, ran for chair of the Democratic National Committee promising to launch a "50-state Strategy" to rebuild the party from the bottom up.

Now is when the talk meets the walk. The Deaniacs have come into their own—men and women who were trained in Dean's 2004 campaign are plotting the strategies of all the Democratic front-runners. Dean of the scream is coaching the state parties, and something like the infectious grassroots glee that Dean's supporters felt years ago appears to be animating (especially) Barack Obama's volunteers. Forty years after the coming apart of 1968, could this be the year that Democrats finally permit regular people to play a real role in party politics? Or is a whole new cohort of eager-beaver change-makers signing up for heartbreak?

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Talk to the people at the DNC, and it's a brand-new day. At the level of technology, staff and resources, there's been what one staffer described as an extreme makeover. Backed by state and local elected officials, Chairman Dean confounded his Beltway critics when he increased contributions to the party (especially all-important small contributions of "hard" money). By the 2006 midterms, the DNC was paying 183 people to work for forty-nine state parties (between three and four workers per state). For the first time in party history, Democrats had a national, fully functioning computerized voter file accessible through a single user-friendly online tool [see Matt Stoller, page 20]. Just about anyone could slice and dice data and print up-to-date precinct maps from a laptop, and party organizers could communicate with voters through those voters' own social networks, courtesy of software applications like Facebook.

It's not the stuff that turns on political reporters. After all, campaign correspondents don't actually cover campaigns; they cover candidates. Hence the oceans of ink spent on Obama's speaking style, Edwards's energy and Hillary Clinton's emotions or lack thereof. What's ignored in most reporting is what really counts in a tight election: the field game, which is to say, the organizers' skills, their tools, and their own and their volunteers' level of commitment.

"Long-term infrastructure-building isn't sexy, but those who were skeptical are less so now," DNC communications director Karen Finney told me recently. The 2006 midterms, she said, "showed how investing in grassroots pays off." This past May the DNC hired a new political director, David Boundy, who had a history in field organizing for the AFL-CIO. Boundy launched the Neighbor to Neighbor canvassing project, which he hopes will have trained a half-million volunteer leaders by Labor Day.

"You are the grassroots leaders of this party," Dean tells potential volunteers somberly in a DVD shown at house parties. "The linchpin of our plan is you."

But the skeptics haven't quite been vanquished. All this "you" and "us" talk is great. But how does it translate into policy? Is the penthouse party dead or only resting?

Colorado, which holds its caucus February 5, offers a microcosm of the national picture. In 2004, even as Coloradans voted 52 to 47 percent for Bush over Kerry, Democrats won control of both chambers of state government and picked up one of just two Democratic gains in the Senate. Grassroots organizers, working in smart coalitions helped by strategic local philanthropists, tasted power, but they've bristled ever since at the dismal votes of Blue Dog Senator Ken Salazar—the party establishment's pick over a progressive in the primary.

Promising change, a new state party chair was elected after the 2004 race. Incoming Patricia Waak's first order of business was changing the locks on the party office. "It was a bit of a coup," says Waak, who won by three votes. Since then, she's hired full-time staff and regional organizers and traveled to every county in the state. With help from the DNC, the party has expanded beyond its metropolitan base, but the real tests lie ahead. The 2004 election "started a grassroots revolution in Colorado, with the established status quo on one side and overwhelming grassroots desire on the other," a new regional organizer, Robin Van Ausdall, told me. The 2006 election "was a proving ground. But 2008 is where we find out how comfortable everybody is with the changes that have been happening."

When the Democratic convention comes to town, the spotlight will hit Denver. For all the talk about the party's first Western convention, the more critical question (insofar as anything that happens at the convention is critical) is, Who will be on the stage: new faces or the Salazar sort?

All this 'you' and 'us' talk is great. But how does it translate into policy? Is the penthouse party dead or only resting?

The answer has implications for both style and priorities, and when it comes to the potential nominees (who will direct the goings-on), the front-runners are very different.

Colorado, just days after the Iowa caucuses, offered a good sense of which candidates were running which kind of field operation. Before paid staff arrived from New Hampshire and Iowa, state organizations fueled by passion were in better shape than those fueled mostly by money. Hillary Clinton's campaign had an office (it opened December 8), but I never saw a yard sign. Although I did hear from one flustered staffer who'd just flown in, no one could get the authority to sit down for an interview. The Obama campaign had nine campaign offices and two dozen events—*that weekend*. I crawled my way in a snowstorm to a precinct captains' meeting in Colorado Springs, a place more famous for military bases and reactionary megachurches than any kind of Democratic politics.

In contrast to the media's picture of the Obama campaign, only one person at the meeting was under 30. For all the talk of race, every participant was white. Jason DeGroot, fresh from ten years in the Air Force, said it was his first sortie into politics. Across from DeGroot sat Mike Maday, a member of the local county executive committee, who attended his first Obama meeting while on Democratic Party business. "I was looking for precinct chairs, but I was won over by the participants," he said. That wasn't in a flush of excitement post-Iowa. It was back last February.

In the summer, Maday attended a Camp Obama training out of state. "This campaign's all about organizing," Maday told me, "which is to say, taking leadership from the community." The campaign camps were designed to build volunteer infrastructure in less resourced, second-tier states. There's all the difference in the world between canvassers and organizers, says Marshall Ganz, a longtime organizer and professor at Harvard who was a Camp Obama trainer. "Canvassers assess voter preferences. Organizers inspire commitment."

Laura Flanders, host of RadioNation *on Air America, is the author of* Blue Grit: Making Impossible, Improbable and Inspirational Political Change in America, *out in paperback with a forward by Naomi Klein (Penguin).*

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Canvassing is a touchy topic. Since the decline of network TV and the ascendance of TiVo-type ad zappers, no means of communication pays off better for candidates than door-to-door contact made by canvassers. "That kid with the blue hair and the nose ring is more effective than any piece of mail you'll ever read," says Boundy. A recent study revealed that door-to-door canvassing is also a more efficient means of generating votes than phone banking. The DNC came under fire in 2004 for contracting out their canvassing operations to for-profit groups that hire young people at rock-bottom wages. Dana Fisher studied paid canvassing for her book *Activism Inc.* and concluded that the outsourcing of campaigns was "strangling progressive politics" and turning off potential activists. Today, the DNC is again working with the canvassing company it used in 2004. According to the Campaign for Responsive Politics, the DNC has already paid Grassroots Campaigns Inc. well over $1.6 million for the '08 cycle. Finney says paid canvassers are used only to raise funds for the party's new organizing. But to Fisher, every dollar spent on outside canvassers does damage. "The people have changed, and America has changed since 2004," she says, "but the party's repeating its mistakes."

Since the decline of network TV and the rise of TiVo-type ad zappers, no means of communication pays off more than door-to-door contact.

The Obama campaign, by contrast, is thriving, thanks to volunteers. "Social relationships are what inspire commitment," says Ganz. Before an Obama campaign office opened in Colorado Springs, volunteers had recruited 171 captains to cover 387 local precincts. Megan Cornish, a senior at Colorado College, had ninety students signed up to work for Obama on caucus day. Together, she said, her student group had registered 200 new voters on a campus of 2,000. "I imagine this sounds a bit sappy," she told me, "but it is absolutely true… the emotive bonds we have developed may be the reason this campaign has the energy that it does."

"We're doing almost as well as the party on recruitment, and the party's spent years on it," claims Maday, who believes the party will ultimately benefit from the infusion of new enthusiasm. When a Colorado Springs office had its grand opening on January 10, between 250 and 300 people showed up. It's the same in Pueblo, Durango, Fort Collins and Grand Junction: self-started, well-resourced and carefully trained by people in the head office, grassroots Obama groups of just the sort Dean's 2004 campaign dreamed about exist all over Colorado. Motivation appears to have met methodology at last, with a lot of help from veterans like Ganz (who traces his skills back to the United Farm Workers).

In the early primary states, Hillary Clinton's field operations have been extensive, thorough and front-loaded. As long ago as June, the Concord paper reported that the Clinton team had almost as many paid staffers in New Hampshire as the rest of the Democrats combined. In Iowa, the Clinton campaign turned out 2,500 women over age 87, most of whom said they were caucusing for the first time in their lives. At the emotional level, Clinton has certainly shown herself to be capable of winning over even those who hate her votes for war by tapping their wish for a woman President. But Clinton's campaign style sends a very different message from Obama's. As Cornish put it, "Senator Clinton's campaign is all about her. Obama's campaign is all about us." When Obama held a rally in New York, the lead speakers were unknown volunteers. When I saw Clinton address an open-air rally in Washington, DC, she was flanked by senators, a past secretary of state and Grammy award winner Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds. Clinton is also cut-throat. In Iowa, her campaign alienated young people when it suggested that college students who grew up out of state should not caucus there. In Nevada, where the casino workers' Culinary Union endorsed Obama, Bill Clinton came out in defense of a lawsuit intended to keep caucuses from taking place at casinos.

Dan Slater, vice chair of the Colorado Democrats, endorsed Obama in part because of his concern that a second President Clinton would take steps to dismantle the 50-state Strategy. "With Clinton you get the same professional DLC types who've been making the same mistakes for thirty years," says Slater. People associated with the Clintons—Harold Ickes, Terry McAuliffe, Rahm Emanuel and Chuck Schumer—have been Dean's loudest critics. James Carville took his last swipe at Dean after the 2006 midterms.

Clinton's top field adviser says any talk of dismantling the 50-state Strategy is absurd. "We're focused 100 percent on the early primary states," Karen Hicks explains in response to a question about Colorado. Hicks headed field operations for the DNC in 2004 and for Dean before that. (She brought in Ganz to train Dean's organizers in New Hampshire.) "I wouldn't be here if I didn't believe that Hillary Clinton utterly understands the importance of grassroots," says Hicks. Asked about the Clinton team's famous "discipline" and thirst for control, Hicks retorts that "Hillary Clinton has no interest in dismantling any operation that serves a Democratic victory."

Unfortunately, the party powerful have a long record of preserving their power first. Rahm Emanuel famously cherry-picked candidates to back in the 2006 primaries. His successor at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, Chris Van Hollen, vowed to maintain a hands-off policy in primary contests. Suspicions were raised that there may have been pressure from on high, however, when Angie Paccione—whose grassroots campaign nearly beat maniac homophobe Marilyn Musgrave in Colorado's 4th District last year—bowed out last fall after one of Senator Salazar's staffers entered the primary against her. It left the same bad taste in Colorado as did Speaker Nancy Pelosi's decision to throw a fundraiser for old-school incumbent Al Wynn, who's facing a movement-stirring challenge by Donna Edwards, in Maryland.

In the end, trust and motivation matter. No amount of sweet "we" talk and Internet tools can patch up a party that's trampling on its partners or cowering when it has promised to stand tall. "We saw what happened in 2006. Electing a Democratic majority wasn't enough," says Tim Carpenter of Pro-

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gressive Democrats of America. If Democrats want to get their approval ratings up enough to inspire people to sweat for them in 2008, they've got to be willing to fight the battles their voters want fought, Carpenter believes.

Yet ideological disputes over policy points are just what today's "we"-driven campaigns dodge. The moral energy source that Obama's organizers are tapping is longing: for "change," for a new "us," for a new way of doing politics. Regular voters are so hungry for connection that they fall in love with a man who talks about "we" even if his healthcare plan leaves them out. As one campaign worker put it, "I like the message, but I love the method." It's not necessarily vapid. A genuine commitment to a new "us" would have policy implications. "Ronald Reagan rallied a fractured nation around individual rights and competition. A campaign dedicated to a new 'us' could break from that ethic at last," says Ganz. It could translate into a new politics of equality and inclusion. But only if it's real, and only if it lasts beyond election day. In the meantime, a new generation of experienced grassroots organizers is maturing, and the question this time is, Will the party value them? ■

Dems Get New Tools, New Talent

Better technology has activated new voters.

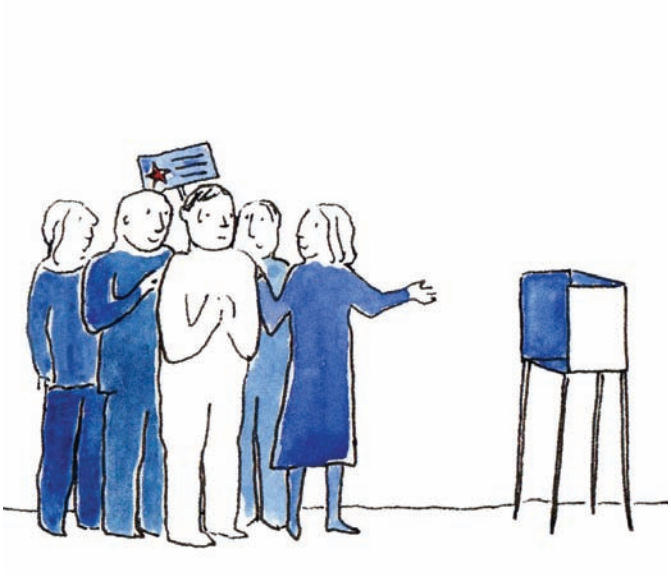
by MATT STOLLER

The first two Democratic nominating contests might have produced different winners, but what they shared was turnout staggeringly above normal levels. In New Hampshire, turnout for Democrats was up 31 percent from 2004, and in Iowa it doubled. Turnout in Iowa was so high that had 2004 caucus winner John Kerry taken his vote total into this year's competition, he would have placed a dismal fourth, 20,000–30,000 votes behind third-place contestant Hillary Clinton. And in Nevada, the turnout of more than 100,000 caucus-goers shattered expectations from the state Democratic Party and the top campaigns alike.

When compared with Republicans', the numbers look even better. About twice as many Democrats voted in Iowa as Republicans. "We'd better be careful as a party," Mike Huckabee warned his fellow Republicans in the wake of the Iowa caucuses, "because if we don't give people something to be *for*, and only something to be against, we're going to lose that next election, and there are some fundamental issues that we lose with it." Mike Podhorzer, deputy political director of the AFL-CIO, puts it this way: "You have dead turnout on the Republican side and insane turnout on the Democratic side."

There are, no doubt, a number of factors driving the disparity: the amount of money Democrats have sunk into the early states has quadrupled since 2004, and polls show that Democratic voters are confident their nominee will eventually win, while half of Republican voters are so demoralized they're considering a third-party option [see Micah Sifry, page 24]. But there's also a more prosaic explanation: since 2004, because of a mixture of improved technology, better organizers and more investment in voter contact, Democratic campaigns have simply gotten better at talking to more people.

To understand why turnout is going up, you have to know a little bit about how voters make choices. Since the 1960s, television has been the primary conduit for political information, with campaigns spending about 80 percent of their budget on media. But while broadcast television can reach millions of voters, it is, as Podhorzer notes, a dying medium. "The main thing that has changed is the heading to collapse of broadcast TV and heading to dominance of systematic, organized word of mouth and more targeted communication," he says. What's most promising about the shift from broadcast campaigns to those centered on "systematic, organized word of mouth" is the possibility of activating new voters, something TV has never been capable of doing. Political scientists Alan Gerber and Donald Green, experts on election turnout, conducted an experiment in 1998 with voters in New Haven, Connecticut, showing that person-to-person canvassing when the canvassers are ethnically and demographically matched to voters can increase turnout by 10 percent with a single contact and a nonpartisan message.



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"Field," as person-to-person voter contact is called in campaign-speak, has traditionally been less important than paid media or television. In 2004, due to the unprecedented amount of money and energy thrown into the campaign, field received more attention than it had in previous cycles, but both the Kerry campaign and outside groups lacked the ability to absorb it. There were so many people trying to help in 2004, and the response from institutions was so poor, that groups sprouted up all over the country to canvass on their own. In New York City organizers even held a "micro-summit" of the different anti-Bush groups every week to coordinate activities outside the

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Kerry campaign, a structure replicated all over the country. While the GOP used a volunteer-driven set of church networks, on the Democratic side 527s like America Coming Together used paid canvassers instead of organic volunteer networks. For its part, the Kerry campaign oriented itself around television. One Dean house party organizer complained about this on a post on Daily Kos, relaying a conversation from a top Kerry aide, who told her, "To be blunt, this is a fat-cat, top-down campaign. The campaign staff doesn't really get grassroots."

As easy as it is to blame the Kerry campaign for organizing failures, the problems were systemic. The most famous field experiment of 2004 was Howard Dean's "Perfect Storm" in Iowa, when the campaign bused in 3,500 young volunteers from out of state, issued each an orange wool hat and unleashed them on the doors of Iowans across the state. The orange hat would later come to symbolize the flaws of a campaign bringing in outsiders to canvass, but whatever culture clash there was at the door was compounded by the campaign's tools. The key to any field effort is a database of potential voters, known as a voter file. If that voter file is incomplete or error-ridden or low-tech, the entire operation grinds to a halt.

Adam Mordecai, a Dean staffer who helped run the Perfect Storm, described the problem as follows: "The one *major* issue that really foiled the perfect storm…was the completely dysfunctional voter-file system. The company we contracted the voter file to was *way* out of their league. Their system would crash perpetually, field organizers would be lucky if they could ever access the system to download lists and said lists were usually way out-of-date or incorrect because no one could get access to the system to update them. Iowans would get repeated calls from different volunteers within the same hour. It was a disaster. It alienated a lot of Iowans who were simply tired of hearing from Deaniacs over and over again."

The Dean campaign was actually pretty typical of the entire Democratic Party in this regard. In 2000, to pluck just one example, the Democratic National Committee didn't even have a national voter file; chair Terry McAuliffe tried to remedy the problem, but the system he built suffered from nearly all of the problems Mordecai describes. It's no wonder, then, that Democrats and their progressive allies did such a poor job with volunteers and voters in 2004. If it takes all night to prepare a map for a canvasser, you can't absorb very many volunteers, and you can't talk to that many voters face to face. Democratic turnout was substantially up in 2004, so the campaigns did a lot right, but the amount left on the table was enormous. Field organizers generally believe that a good field campaign increases turnout by 3 to 5 percentage points, so it's not an exaggeration to say that field performance could have made the margin of Bush's victory.

After 2004 several efforts were launched to fix this problem. Two high-quality voter files were created, one at the Dean-led DNC built by technologist Josh Hendler, and one outside the DNC called Catalist, assembled by a group of former DNC consultants. A front-end web application known as the Voter Activation Network, or VAN, was standardized across campaigns. The Donkey, a volunteer management program developed in 2005, along with bar-code scanners, Palm Pilots and Google Maps, whose satellite feature allowed field organizers to cut turf without having to physically explore the routes, produced huge efficiency gains. Judith Freeman, cofounder and chief executive organizer of the New Organizing Institute and a former senior political strategist for the AFL-CIO, notes the change. "Prior to 2004, the work of creating walk packets and materials for door-to-door canvassing was a labor-intensive process that could take all night and a significant amount of a field manager's time. Now much of it is automated."

The new crop of campaign software tools sends data back instantly to a centralized database, so effort isn't wasted on voters who have moved or died. And campaign knowledge is accretive, with voting history, political identification and contact history retained every cycle. (This is especially important in states like Washington and Minnesota, where voter files do not identify voters by party.) With the data put on the web, organizations could begin experimentation and innovation with the tools. In 2006 New York Congressional candidate John Hall allowed his volunteers to do "virtual phone-banking" through a browser. With a log-in, volunteers could get a list of people to call and a script, and then plow through them at home or in groups. This technique has been widely adopted across the party; there are now volunteer-driven groups on Barack Obama's site that offer help for people trying to use the DNC's new voter file to do this. MoveOn.org has used Catalist to launch VotePoke.com, a site that lets people look up whether they or their friends are registered to vote, using social pressure to increase political engagement. With better data, there is substantially more sophisticated modeling, research and training through such groups as the New Organizing Institute and the Analyst Institute (disclosure: I'm currently a fellow at the New Organizing Institute).

We are in the middle of a massive wave of campaign innovation, led by organizers who will spread throughout progressive politics.

It's not yet possible to measure exactly the impact of all these improvements. This is simply a different landscape for politics, one that turns politics from the top-down media focus of a James Carville–esque "War Room" to one that relies more on word of mouth, like a church or a labor union. Podhorzer notes that labor, having invested in substantial word-of-mouth contact since 1998, has retained its share of the electorate even as union population density has declined (union households have represented about a quarter of the electorate since 1980, even though labor density in America has been cut in half). And union households favor Democrats over Republicans, the only white working-class demographic in which Republicans have not made gains. "Because union campaigns have never been predicated on advertising but on people talking to people, we've seen the union vote for Democrats and union

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turnout go up substantially," Podhorzer said. "I think that these tools really do help make a difference."

It's also significant that volunteers and organizers, the future blood of the party, have a much better experience. In 2004 I signed up to volunteer with the Kerry campaign and got no response. By contrast, within a few hours of signing up on the Obama website, I was contacted by a local group called Metro DC for Obama, offered bumper stickers and yard signs and asked about my schedule and volunteer interests. I was also invited to several primary watch parties, and every tool on the site worked smoothly. It's no wonder that the Democratic campaigns can bring huge numbers of new people into the process; the work done by the new organizers has made the process much less frustrating. And beyond the tools, there's talent, which is where the Democratic advantage could be locked in permanently. Consultant Zack Exley notes, "Democrats have enjoyed bumper crops of field organizers for two presidential cycles. The next big question is this: Will the nominee succeed in harvesting these crops and making the very best use of these organizers? Or will she or he put blockages and bureaucracy in the way of these young organizers, as happened in the 2004 general election?" Asks Freeman, whose organization trains and networks people and organizers in political technology, "Will these organizers leave politics for higher-paid jobs in sectors that desire their skills, like the technology arena? How will we manage ongoing leadership development?"

These systemic changes considered in isolation can seem arcane, but they all facilitate a larger cultural movement, one that points toward a very different kind of postbroadcast politics. As author Seth Godin, who analyzes consumer trends, explains it, "The key assumption in the analysis of typical field organizers is this: one persuaded equals 1.1 or perhaps 1.5 votes. In other words, the multiplier is very small. That's why you need to run lots of ads and do lots of direct mail. It's not very efficient, it's very expensive, but you can really pile it on. The idea is that if you hit someone ten or twenty or a thousand times, sooner or later you'll get some conversion. Obama and [Ron] Paul do different math. They assume a multiplier of three or even six. Which means that creating (and living) a story that turns people evangelical is far more efficient than hewing to the middle of the road. They assume that if they can create a passionate, raving fan, they'll be able to translate that into a virus, an idea that spreads and scales over time. When that happens, they end up stoking the fire instead of lighting a lot of matches over and over again. Starbucks did this, believe it or not. They converted people into coffee fiends (particularly Starbucks fiends), who then converted their friends. And it happens on the net all the time."

In the post-1972 TV era, Democratic campaigns didn't have the tools or trained organizers available to direct large numbers of volunteers efficiently to where they needed to be. Now they do. And social networks like Facebook, Blackplanet, blogs and SMS, as well as basic e-mail, can be layered onto the clean new databases to reach voters wherever they are, for much less money than TV advertising. We are in the middle of a massive wave of campaign innovation, led by organizers who will eventually spread outward to every nook and cranny of progressive politics. The larger significance of this architectural revolution

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in progressive politics isn't clear, but it is the first sustained challenge to the dominance of television and direct mail in the political system since those media displaced urban party machines in the 1960s. For now, it's working against Republicans: "Democrats have a very significant natural advantage in the technology area, which is that younger people are much more Democratic," said Podhorzer. But this advantage isn't permanent. "If the 1960s, '70s and '80s have a lesson, it's that the inherent character of the shift in technology, whether it's to direct mail or broadcast or social networks, may have some bias toward one ideological side or another, but it also matters what the players do. Something may in its first, completely anarchic moments favor one side, but in the end it's not like the major economic interests that create a right wing in the country say, 'Oops, they've got the answer; now we're not going to win anymore.'" ■

They Like Mike

Unity08 tanked, but Draft Bloomberg hasn't.

by MICAH L. SIFRY

In May 2006 Doug Bailey and Gerald Rafshoon, two veteran political consultants who worked, respectively, for Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter in 1976, announced the creation of Unity08, an attempt to build a "virtual" online party to nominate a unity ticket for 2008. The project, which had the backing of former independent Governor Angus King of Maine, actor Sam Waterston and maybe one keg party's worth of idealistic college students, got a lot of media attention, at least at first. By late last year, it claimed that more than 100,000 people had signed up to be virtual delegates to its online convention. But in January it quietly closed its portals, blaming the Federal Election Commission for limiting its fundraising options.

Now Bailey and Rafshoon have launched a new crusade, a fifty-state petition campaign to draft New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg to run for President as an independent. Is their new cause headed for the same fate as Unity08?

It's very hard to build a viable third party in America. The main third parties—the Greens and the Libertarians—have achieved some longevity mostly by turning inward and focusing on ideological purity. But neither is up to the task of electing anyone to an office higher than city councilor or state representative. A would-be independent also isn't helped by the fact that the distinctions between the two major parties seem sharper now than they were in the 1990s.

Finally, the Internet is changing the political game in ways that subtly weaken third-party rationales. Power is shifting away from capital-intensive, unaccountable hierarchies toward more people-intensive, open networks of individual activists. Or, to put it another way, it may make more sense to work for change inside the netroots paradigm rather than going outside the two-party framework to struggle for a long-shot candidate.

I've spent time with Bailey and Rafshoon, and both seem like honorable men, motivated by a sincere sense that the political process is broken by big money and special-interest domination, and that the time to fix it is running out. But their Unity08 project was riddled with contradictions and flaws. For example, they started out promising to build an online membership of 25 million delegates, then downgraded their plans to 10 million. By last fall, with fewer than 100,000 members, they had revised that goal downward again, to 1 million. And yet, at no point in Unity08's existence did the group achieve a growth rate that would enable it to reach even that goal.

CAITLIN DOVER

Why? Because Bailey and Rafshoon started with a narrow and artificial base of aging political consultants and college kids and never expanded it. For a country that has a one-third nonwhite minority, they had no visible representation of blacks or Latinos. Nor did they tap any organized constituency—be it labor, small business, big business, retiree organizations, vets, church groups—that might help spread Unity08's reach.

In fact, the only base Unity08 had was the media. The group's best days of growth were when it got actor-spokesman Waterston on TV. But an organization that grows only when it gets media coverage is a remarkably weak organism. A little bad media coverage (or silence) could kill it easily.

It also didn't help that Unity08 wasn't really about enabling independent voters, or dissatisfied Democrats, Republicans and independents, to hammer out an agenda. The big decisions about the agenda were made in advance, by its founders. Thus certain issues, like entitlement reform, were deemed "serious" and others, like choice, were deemed "divisive." Who had the authority to make these decisions? Why was it

Micah L. Sifry is co-founder of the techPresident.com group blog and author of Spoiling for a Fight: Third-Party Politics in America *(Routledge).*

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withheld from the members? No answer was given.

And then, for the people who were, despite all the obstacles, sufficiently self-motivated to join Unity08, the group couldn't keep its promises of self-organization and internal democracy. I'm indebted to blogger Jim Cook of Irregular Times, who has kept a gimlet eye on the group from the start, for documenting all kinds of problems:

§ The group promised to elect a bipartisan unity ticket funded primarily by small-dollar donations, but the bulk of its donations came in chunks of $5,000 and up.

§ It attacked the power of lobbyists but had two lobbyists as co-chairs of its rules committee (one of the lobbyists worked on the pharmaceutical industry's "Harry and Louise" campaign to kill healthcare reform).

§ It claimed to be hunting for independent candidates, but one budding Unity08 candidate had to wait at least three months to obtain the forms to collect the petitions needed to move from being a prospective candidate to being a qualified candidate.

§ It claimed to be devoted to a democratic process whereby its members would come together to nominate a ticket, but when dissenting comments appeared on Unity08's message boards, they were often summarily deleted by the group's staff.

Most serious, Unity08 promised a process it couldn't deliver. No one has ever built and administered an online convention where hundreds of thousands, or even millions, of people were able to vote securely and trust the results. It just hasn't been done, at least not yet. Unity08's leaders premised their entire project on being able to deliver such a convention—and to do so on the first try.

Now Bailey and Rafshoon have latched onto the Bloomberg bubble, and they're hoping to pump it up into a real candidacy. Bailey gave me this rationale for a Bloomberg run: "Particularly with the economy going bad, I think there's a public awareness that the country is in trouble, that we face more crucial and tough issues than at any time we can remember: terrorism, the economy, the entitlement crunch, failing schools, failing parents, immigration, global climate change, inadequate healthcare coverage. On top of that, the political system in Washington is broken and can't come to common ground on any of these issues. I think the public sees that. Therefore I think that they're likely to be ready to consider rational change in the political system in order to find a way of solving all those other problems. That's what Bloomberg represents—an extraordinarily successful problem solver in the political world."

Rafshoon agrees. "After seven years, this country is ready for a competent leader," he said at a January press conference in Washington. "It's ready for a nonideological approach to our problems, and it's ready to stop the partisan bickering that goes on between parties and within parties."

The two men have launched a Draft Bloomberg Committee with their own funds, and say it is completely independent of Bloomberg. Curiously, the group is organized as both a political committee subject to FEC limits and as a 527 independent committee. "We have one committee that divides the funds that we receive," Bailey told me, with the first $5,000 of every donation going to the PAC and the rest to the 527. That's a financial arrangement that gets around a limit that hindered Unity08's fundraising efforts. The Draft Bloomberg Committee has taken over its lease.

Is this an election where competence can beat ideology? Certainly there is something in the air that is militating against the partisanship of the past two decades and buoying candidates like Barack Obama and Mike Huckabee. Apart from the hard-right 20 to 30 percent of the electorate that would be repelled by Bloomberg's liberal positions on gun control, gay rights and abortion, there's at least a plurality in his reach. Current polls show that Bloomberg isn't very well-known nationwide and draws about 12 percent in a potential three-way race. But that's without his running an active campaign; essentially, 12 percent is his floor, not his ceiling.

But I don't think the country is likely to rally to a split-the-difference bureaucratic problem solver. If Bloomberg runs, he has to take some clear stands to position himself in front of the other nominees, not just between them. Bloomberg should pay attention to the factors that helped Jesse Ventura beat two traditional politicians for the governorship of Minnesota in 1998. The key is to be positioned as the one truthteller in the race against two career pols who are too ambitious and beholden to their parties' dominant interests to do what is best for the country. To be sure, Bloomberg has none of Ventura's natural charisma, and I have my doubts about how far his patrician style will get him with the lunch-pail crowd. However, working-class people in New York City seem to like that he is not "owned" by anyone, and he could easily attack the major-party candidates as being too beholden to all the money they're raising.

Is America ready for a nonideological problem solver with liberal views on gun control, gay rights and abortion?

If he runs as a no-nonsense skeptic of the "war on terror," cautious about unilateralism overseas, for dramatic action to combat climate change, for an end to wasteful government spending and for big changes that make the government conduct its business in a far more transparent and interactive manner, Bloomberg could conceivably draw a plurality made up of independents, moderate Republicans and insurgent Democrats. That's especially the case if the major-party nominees are seen as representing their establishments.

But the failure of Unity08 should give Bloomberg pause. True, it failed because it ran out of money, something Bloomberg doesn't lack. But money cannot replace a compelling message (just ask Presidents Perot, Forbes, Gramm and Connally). The current presidential field is a lot tougher than the candidates Bloomberg has faced in New York. And other than a few consultants and earnest college students, no one seems to be clamoring for an iconoclastic billionaire to get into the race. ■

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Progressive Democratic Challengers

They're fighting for the soul of the party.

by JOHN NICHOLS

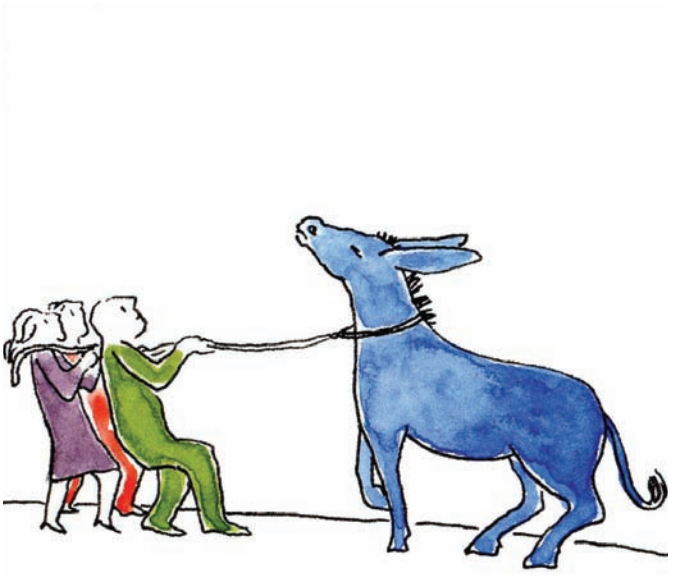
Maryland Congressional candidate Donna Edwards did not need a memo from a pollster to tell her the subprime mortgage crisis would be an issue in her 2008 race. Campaigning on the doorsteps and at Metro stops of her racially and economically diverse suburban Washington district, she heard women talking last summer about how a credit crunch might cost them their homes. Edwards, one of a new breed of savvy policy wonks and strategists who are leaving the public-interest community to bid for major elected office, knew how to respond. Months before Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama began promising to fight to keep middle-class families in their homes—and with an urgency that is still missing from the response of House and Senate Democratic leaders—Edwards called for radically revising the 2005 bankruptcy bill as part of a plan to protect homeowners from financial ruin.

It didn't hurt that the incumbent Democrat she's challenging in Maryland's February 12 primary, eight-term Congressman Albert Wynn, voted for the bankruptcy bill, favored by commercial banks, which have contributed $185,917 to his campaign. But for Edwards, this was about more than political positioning. "Prince Georges County has the highest rate of foreclosures in Maryland, and my ZIP code has the highest rate of foreclosures in the county," says Edwards, a veteran activist on issues of concern to women and working families. "When I talk about why we need a different kind of Democrat in Congress—someone who sides with consumers, not corporate interests—people understand exactly what I'm talking about."

Score another point for Edwards. With support from the Service Employees International Union and other key unions, environmental groups and liberal activists with Democracy for America and Progressive Democrats of America, she is given a fair chance of upsetting Wynn, a corporate-friendly Democrat who voted to authorize Bush to attack Iraq, pass Vice President Cheney's energy bill and protect pharmaceutical companies from consumer-friendly reforms.

The Edwards-Wynn race is a bellwether contest in the fight for the soul of the Democratic Party. That fight is at least as likely to be determined in this year's Congressional primaries as in a stilted race for the presidency, where both Clinton and Obama are eyeing the middle ground they expect to occupy in the fall. These local primaries have national importance, as they could answer an essential question: will a Democratic Party that muddled its message after gaining control of Congress in 2006 advance a progressive brief in the post-Bush era?

No matter what happens in the presidential race, Democrats are likely to finish 2008 in a stronger position than they started. Acknowledging the inevitable at the start of an election season in which their President's approval ratings are in the dumps and a nasty recession is taking shape, House and Senate Republicans are retiring at dramatically high rates. Open-seat contests across



CAITLIN DOVER

the country are ripe for partisan shifts in a year when voters tell pollsters they're inclined toward candidates with a D after their name. In addition, vulnerable Republican incumbents face stiff challenges. So it is that Democrats, who now hold a bare 51-to-49 majority in the Senate—relying uncomfortably on Connecticut Independent Joe Lieberman's tenuous allegiance to their causes—speak of picking up open Republican seats in Colorado, New Mexico and Virginia and of defeating Republican incumbents such as Minnesota's Norm Coleman and New Hampshire's John Sununu. And so House Democrats look to pad their thirty-one-seat majority, with good prospects of gaining seats GOP incumbents have abandoned in the recession-wary states of Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

But what will Democrats in power do in 2009? Will they be as disappointingly cautious and unfocused as the Democrats of the 2007 Congress, who frustrated not just the party's base but a broader electorate that gives the Democratic Congress lower ratings than the Republican White House? Or will they develop the progressive agenda and display the strategic sense needed to give meaning to all this year's talk of "change"?

That question is in play as Democrats struggle to identify a presidential nominee. But it could be answered in Congressional primaries that are fought beyond the national spotlight. Historically, Democratic Congresses have tended to pull Democratic Presidents to the left. But Presidents rarely go willingly. "If there is a Democratic President, there will be an enormous effort to get everyone on the same page, and it will not be so progressive a page as some of us would like," says Institute for Policy Studies president John Cavanagh. "Who is in Congress, how they got there and how committed they are to a progressive agenda will matter as regards the direction of the Democratic Party in power."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's allies excuse her caution by saying she's been hamstrung by the conservative, centrist, corporate Democrats she must satisfy to keep the caucus united. While Pelosi's critics see this as a convenient out for a leader

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who has not hesitated to raise campaign money from the same interests that funded Republican campaigns, veteran House liberals—many of whom maintain close relations with the Speaker—quietly suggest that the best way to push Pelosi in a progressive direction is to give her a more progressive caucus. Where will the new progressives come from? Some Democrats who beat Republicans in swing districts will join the seventy-two-member Congressional Progressive Caucus, but if the chamber is to change cautious Democrats who represent safely blue districts must be replaced with aggressive progressives. The amiable way to do this is when a Democratic member retires, as is likely to happen when San Francisco–area Representative Tom Lantos, who disappointed antiwar activists when he voted to authorize President Bush's war against Iraq, is replaced this year by a Democrat with a more steadily progressive take on international affairs—probably former State Senator Jackie Speier.

The more contentious route involves primary challenges to disappointing incumbents. And if the pattern that has developed in early primary states is any indication, this year will see more than its share of serious ones.

The decision of several states to hold local elections on the same day as front-loaded national contests has created a Congressional primary timeline that, in states like Illinois, Maryland and Ohio, parallels the fight for the presidential nomination. On February 5, the same day that Illinois and a score of other states will select convention delegates, Chicago-area Congressman Daniel Lipinski, whose votes with the Bush Administration have earned him the derisive label "Democrat in Name Only," faces a determined challenge from Mark Pera, a progressive who breaks with Lipinski to support a woman's right to choose and who opposes the Iraq War. Pera has secured solid support from liberal groups and a local daily that identifies the challenger as "the type of candidate who will spur party leadership."

The same goes for John Laesch, a Navy veteran and former intelligence analyst, who two years ago won 40 percent of the vote against House Speaker Dennis Hastert. He is now campaigning to fill the seat vacated by a spooked Hastert, who has announced his retirement. With endorsements from progressive groups and liberal luminaries like author Studs Terkel, Laesch is running two races on February 5: one for the Democratic nod to compete in the March 8 special election and one to be the party's November nominee. In neighboring Indiana, where a March 11 special election will replace the late Indianapolis Democrat Julia Carson, the liberal Congresswoman's grandson, Andre Carson, has secured the Democratic nomination and is campaigning to end the war and fund urban needs. If the onetime rapper wins, he'll be the second Muslim member of the House, joining Minnesota Democrat Keith Ellison.

A House primary on the day of Ohio's March 4 presidential primary will see Cleveland-area voters decide whether Dennis Kucinich, an outspoken critic of Pelosi's cautious approach to cutting Iraq occupation funding and impeaching members of the Bush Administration, will remain a thorn in the leadership's side. Despite his national profile—or perhaps because of it—Kucinich could be outspent by a challenger who has already raised $225,000 from donors who disapprove of the

Marxism & Scientific Development

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Congressman's positions on various issues, including his strong support for a Palestinian state. "Visualize millions of dollars pouring in to try to squash our efforts," says Kucinich, who seeks votes for re-election and for the Democratic presidential nomination on primary day.

As the presidential race settles, the Congressional primary season will ramp up with contests like former Iowa legislator Ed Fallon's June challenge to House Democrat Leonard Boswell. Fallon faults Boswell's support of war funding, warrantless wiretapping and free trade, and he's being taken seriously. As a low-budget insurgent candidate for the Democratic gubernatorial nod in 2006, Fallon carried Boswell's district. It's not just Boswell who gets low marks from Fallon. "Like most people in Iowa, I'm pretty unimpressed," he says of Congressional Democrats.

The notion that a Democratic Congress can and should be more progressive is part of what drew Donna Edwards out of the public-interest community—where she directed the National Network to End Domestic Violence and the Center for a New Democracy before leading the progressive Arca Foundation—and into the political fray. "No matter what, there's going to be a Democrat representing this district," she says of her race with incumbent Wynn in an area that rarely votes Republican. "It's up to the people of the 4th District to decide what kind of Democrat they want representing them."

Edwards's candidacy is part of a trend that has seen veteran social activists drawn into politics by their frustration with extreme Republicans and cautious Democrats. In 2006 longtime Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy president Mark Ritchie, angered by Republican moves to disenfranchise low-income and minority voters, challenged and beat Minnesota's Republican Secretary of State, while constitutional scholar (and *Nation* contributor) Jamie Raskin upset a Democratic state senator in Maryland. This year, former Common Cause chief Chellie Pingree is running for an open House seat representing Maine.

Edwards, who narrowly lost a late-starting 2006 race against Wynn, is back this year with much more support, from key labor unions as well as EMILY's List. And she has a more nuanced message. Edwards is not just running against the conservative agenda and a Democrat who embraces parts of it; she wants to "push the limits" of the Democratic Party and American politics. "As Democrats, we've been too timid in terms of what our expectations are. You only have to look at the year since Democrats took over in January" 2007, says Edwards. "I think a lot of us have come to realize that it's important to be on the inside. Years ago, Paul Wellstone used to ask me to work in his Senate office. I would say, 'No, no, I'm much more comfortable on the outside.' Now, like a lot of progressives, I've realized that Paul was right. The work progressives do on the outside is essential, but more of us have to be on the inside if we're going to make the Democratic Party the ally we need to change the Congress and the country." ■

Letters

(continued from page 2)

man Podhoretz, Bill Kristol et al. are the most heard and quoted "voices" of American Jews is ludicrous. It is bad for all Americans, not just Jews, that these neoconservative pundits and ultra-rightist organizations have influenced the disastrous policies in Iraq and now beat the drum for an attack on Iran.

Dave Lefcourt

Teaneck, N.J.

Of the Jews who support a Palestinian state, the majority support it in the context of Israel as a Jewish-exclusivist entity. This is the fertile soil in which neocon representation and hawkish organizations bloom. Jews who cringe at the idea of evangelicals making our country a Christian-exclusivist state nevertheless support the Jewish exclusivity of Israel. Jews who support civil rights here continue to support Jewish "right of return" to Israel, while keeping it closed to Palestinian refugees. Jews who would never utter the n-word vilify Arabs/Muslims. I am in a very small minority of Jews who call for the end of Zionism, accountability for Zionism's crimes against humanity, the return of the refugees and one multiethnic democratic state in Israel/Palestine. If more Jews had this truly liberal point of view, we would not be represented by hawkish Zionist organizations.

Rich Siegel

Cambridge, Mass.

One definition of McCarthyism is to lump people together into a group and then generalize about their personal views. Eric Alterman is guilty of such McCarthyism in his January 7/14 column. He lists a group of mostly conservative Jews he thinks are bad for the Jews. He describes thus: "Most are Bush apologists, most supported the invasion of Iraq and most are sympathetic to the idea of an invasion of Iran." I am a liberal Democrat who was part of the legal team opposing Bush's election. I am as far away from being a Bush apologist as possible. I opposed the invasion of Iraq and currently oppose an invasion of Iran. But because I am a Jew and I support Israel (though I oppose the occupation and favor the two-state solution), Alterman lumps me together in the same group as many with whom I disagree. If this is not ethnic profiling, I don't know what is.

Alan Dershowitz

Alterman Replies

New York City

I am pleased to hear of Alan Dershowitz's political perspicacity on matters relating to the election of George W. Bush, neoconservatism, Iraq, Iran and the like. Alas, Dershowitz doth protest quite a bit too much regarding the rest. In my column, I listed those Jewish commentators who speak out most frequently on the Middle East. Surely Dershowitz cannot object to being included on such a list. After doing so, in the following sentence I described the views of "most" of those listed above. Clearly the word "most" implies something different from "all" and allows, explicitly, for exceptions, including Dershowitz, among others. If Dershowitz wishes to emphasize further what I have already implied in my column, however, I have no objection. His accusations, however, of "McCarthyism" and "ethnic profiling" not only strike me as wrongheaded and inaccurate but are unbecoming a Harvard professor (not to mention a graduate of Brooklyn College), and as such, they are making me more than a little *verklempt*.

Eric Alterman

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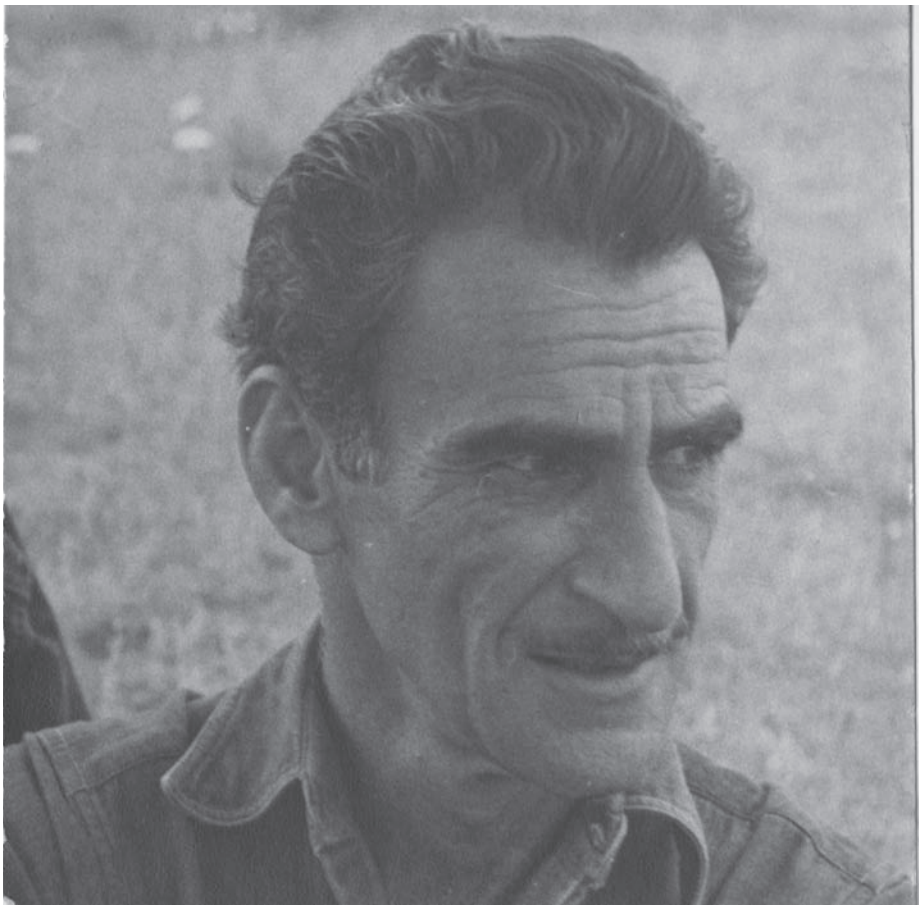
Books & the Arts.

A Test of Poetry

by JAMES LONGENBACH



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George Oppen

George Oppen, who wrote some of the most austerely beautiful poems of the twentieth century, is known best for not writing at all. After publishing *Discrete Series* in 1934, at the age of 26, he entered a period of silence that would not conclude until a quarter-century later, when *The Materials* appeared in 1962. Oppen called himself the oldest promising poet in America, but after *Of Being Numerous* appeared in 1968, it won the Pulitzer Prize.

All poets spend more time not writing than writing; what distinguishes Oppen's silence is not so much its length as its circumstance. Having joined the Communist Party in 1935, Oppen organized the Farmers' Union milk strike, made patterns for Grumman Aircraft, landed in Marseilles with the 103rd Antitank Division, received a Purple Heart, moved to Mexico to avoid being called before the House Un-American Activities Committee, built houses, made furniture and devoted himself to his wife and daughter. More than any other American poet, Oppen begs us to consider the elusive relationship between aesthetic and political responsibilities—from the domestic to the civic to the global. The long-overdue *Selected Prose, Daybooks, and Papers* not only allows us to witness the integrity with which Oppen negotiated these responsibilities; it also suggests why the integrity makes some people—even Oppen's admirers—nervous.

Neither before nor after his silence was Oppen inclined toward didactic poetry; he considered the rhetorical excess of political poems—like the rhetorical excess of political meetings—to be "merely excruciating." In the early 1930s Oppen was associated with the Objectivist movement, a loose association of avant-garde poets that also included Louis Zukofsky, Charles Reznikoff and Lorine Niedecker. And while *Discrete Series*, his first book, is starkly elliptical, his later work combines Objectivist precision with a tender lyricism that his more staunchly experimental colleagues disdained:

> Miracle of the children the brilliant
> Children the word
> Liquid as woodlands Children?
>
> When she was a child I read Exodus
> To my daughter 'The children of
> Israel…'
>
> Pillar of fire
> Pillar of cloud.

No other poet sounds like this. However adamant Oppen's convictions, his meticulously shaped lines embody a music of deference—a constitutional unwillingness to dominate the world by virtue of having understood it. True poetry, says Oppen in an essay collected in *Selected Prose*, is written in "a language that tests itself."

This volume contains nine essays, four of which are brief reviews of other poets (David Antin, Thomas McGrath, Charles Olson), the most important of which is "The Mind's Own Place," an extended essay on the responsibilities of the poet at large. But *Selected Prose* is taken up primarily by selections from the daybooks (collections of fragmentary thoughts, observations, quotations) that Oppen began keeping when he returned to poetry around 1958. These undated pages were variously typed and handwritten; scraps of paper were glued on top of other scraps; pages were held together with staples, pipe cleaners and (on one occasion) a nail hammered into a block of wood. Making his selection, Stephen Cope excises ephemeral material such as shopping lists, but he strives to preserve the layered, palimpsest-like quality of the pages, recording Oppen's deletions and insertions, marking the distinction between handwriting and typing, and occasionally combining material from multiple layers into single entries. In contrast to Oppen's

Selected Prose, Daybooks, and Papers
By George Oppen.
Edited by Stephen Cope.
California. 276 pp. Paper $19.95.

George Oppen and the Fate of Modernism
By Peter Nicholls.
Oxford. 222 pp. $99.

James Longenbach is the author, most recently, of Draft of a Letter, *a book of poems, and* The Art of the Poetic Line, *essays on poetry.*

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poems, in which every syllable is weighed, every line ending calibrated, the daybooks reveal the painstaking process through which he achieved his burnished but equivocal authority.

"I work sometimes for eight hours or so," says Oppen in one entry, "fiddling with corrections. But sometimes I am so tired in two or three hours of effort that I'm shaken." On the same page: "a poem may be devoted to giving clear meaning to one word." Everywhere in evidence is Oppen's devotion to the unfashionable values of authenticity, conviction and sincerity. "If the poet begins to ask us to accept a system of opinions and attitudes," says Oppen, explaining why Allen Ginsberg's exhortations seem to him unconvincing, "he must manage the task of rigorous thought." Rigorous thought, for Oppen, is registered in language that, by testing itself, reveals the flaws of its author's opinions: "If one revises and revises and revises—perhaps weeks and months and years and cannot revise, then there is something wrong with what you are trying to say. The ear knows."

Did Oppen consider such devotion to language political? Generally, twentieth-century American poets recognized two strategies by which a poem might register a political effect: a poem might express a political position thematically or it might embody a position formally by disrupting aesthetic norms. Oppen rejected both these strategies as self-congratulatory, untestable: "We must cease to believe in secret names and unexpected phrases which will burst the world." Without fanfare, he refused the notion that a poet could fulfill his social responsibilities by writing any kind of poem, and neither did this refusal engender any contempt for poetry.

"Is it more important to produce art or to take political action," he asks in the daybooks.

> Of course I cannot pretend to answer such a question. I could point this out, however, that art and political action are in precise opposition in this regard: that it can always be quite easily shown that political action is going to be valuable; it is difficult to ever prove that political action has been valuable. Whereas art is precisely the opposite case; it seems always impossible to prove that it is going to be valuable, and yet it is always quite clear that the art of the past has been of value to humanity. I offer it only as a suggestion that art lacks in political action, not action. One does what he is most moved to do.

What one is "most moved to do" may take different forms, all of them equivocal; it isn't possible to predict the efficacy of any human action, whether in politics or art. Oppen needed to stop writing poems in order to do what he was moved to do, but he never imagined that the terms of his own life could be transformed into categorical imperatives about the relationship of politics and art. In his "Statement on Poetics" he insisted that he could describe "how to write a poem. Or rather, how to write *that* poem." His sense of the power of any human action—writing, organizing, raising a family—was similarly consigned to its occasion.

This refusal of romance is what sometimes makes Oppen's admirers nervous. Especially for those readers who are prone to believe that writing itself constitutes political action, Oppen's silence is rankling. So is his lyricism: the poems are a little too pretty. To such a reader, Oppen's remark that "there are situations which cannot honorably be met by art" is problematic enough; more troubling is Oppen's sense that "some ideas are not politically useful, or useful to the childhood of a daughter"—as if to say that since we'll never know the ultimate value of our work, writing poems is probably less important than being a good dad. That wisdom may not be very glamorous, but everything Oppen did suggests that he believed it to be true.

Cope seems embarrassed that Oppen is not more glamorous, and his annotations are geared toward making the kinds of large claims for writing that Oppen avoids. One footnote suggests with weird evasiveness that a quotation is "likely" to be from Martin Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics*, raising the possibility that the quotation may not be from Heidegger at all. Another note, while admitting that it is "highly unlikely" that Oppen knew Theodor Adorno's work, claims that Oppen echoes Adorno's contention that "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." When Oppen references a well-known verse from the Gospels ("The truth shall make us free"), Cope's tendency to add unearned weight to the daybooks is given free rein: "The phrase that Oppen quotes was also used as an ironic slogan by German revisionist historians who wished to deny the Holocaust, as its German formulation—'Warheit macht Frei'—echoes the Nazi Party dictum 'Arbeit macht Frei' ('Work will set you free'). Given the context here, however, it is unlikely that Oppen is referring to the latter usage." Cope wants desperately for Oppen's words to be freighted with world-historical significance, but his wanly associational notes disregard the values most dear to Oppen himself—precision, clarity, integrity.

Cope's manner of reading Oppen is not unusual. In a study of Oppen's FBI file, recently published in *American Communist History*, Eric Hoffman rightly notes that Oppen and his wife insisted that they never served as spies for the Soviet government. But because Oppen became outraged when an FBI agent asked if he had ever engaged in espionage, Hoffman asks, "is it possible that…either of the Oppens or both were working in some way for Soviet intelligence? Was Oppen's tirade the result of his fear that they might be discovered as having been involved in Soviet espionage?" There is no way to answer these questions—except inasmuch as the questions are meant implicitly to answer themselves. While Hoffman does discover a record of messages sent by an agent named "Oppen," the messages were intercepted while Oppen was in basic training in Louisiana in 1943. Positing that the messages were sent by Oppen's wife, Mary, Hoffman wonders if the reference in the interception to Oppen as "he" may be "a typo." The argument feels desperate: because Oppen could have put his writing to political ends, only the most daunting responsibilities could have silenced him.

Peter Nicholls, the author of one of the first book-length treatments of Oppen's career, refuses this kind of aggrandizing logic. *George Oppen and the Fate of Modernism* is a densely written academic book, but it is not showy; it attends to Oppen's life and work with a modesty that feels seductive, not shy. For instance, Nicholls tracks Oppen's longstanding engagement with Heidegger meticulously, and while highlighting Oppen's one remark about the "danger" of Heidegger's fascination with nation and folk, he admits that "there is little evidence, published or unpublished, that Oppen himself was much concerned on this score." At the same time, Nicholls maintains rightly that Oppen did not simply exchange his Marxism for Heideggerian existentialism: "It was actually a matter of rediscovering politics, but this time in the 'existential world' of being and making rather than in that other world in which 'knowledge' had been devalued to the currency of conspiracy and surveillance." No matter what world he lived in, Oppen wanted the limitations of his language to be recognized.

For this reason, as Nicholls demonstrates, Oppen's poems rarely contain philosophical arguments, just as they rarely contain political arguments. The wonder of

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The Stauer Times

"It's About Time"

News Flash....

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existence is registered not only in what Oppen's poems say—

> In the small beauty of the forest
> The wild deer bedding down—
> That they are there!

—but in their manner of saying: rather than providing the evidence of completed thought, the poems disclose the process of thinking as it happens. Nicholls is more interested in Oppen as a thinker than as a poet, but he allows Oppen to be everything that he was, refusing—like Oppen himself—to ask poetry to shoulder responsibilities it cannot bear.

"I could not have continued as I was going with my early poems," says Oppen in the daybooks, looking back on his years of silence. "And we devoted ourselves to creating happiness for the three of us, and for a few friends and their children so far as possible." This unwillingness to exaggerate the importance of his actions—an eagerness to honor family life as much as any other social institution—is Oppen's signature. It may not be glamorous to suggest that Oppen stopped writing in large part to devote himself to his family, his friends and their children, but whatever else he was, Oppen was a man whose mother had shot herself when he was 4 years old. Half a century later, he could recite the suicide note from memory: "We've been happy—I love you—I worry about the children and school and their clothes—it seems—since I did this and don't know why—that I am not fitted for the business of life."

"Art [is] as old as civilization," says Oppen in the daybooks. "If one can add one thing to so long a history, one color or shape or tone, one perception to so long a history, that is a great deal to do." Here, in the concluding lines of "A Narrative," is the tone Oppen added to the history of poetry:

> I thought I had encountered
>
> Permanence; thought leaped on us
> in that sea
> For in that sea we breathe the open
> Miracle
>
> Of place, and speak
> If we would rescue
> Love to the ice-lit
>
> Upper World a substantial language
> Of clarity, and of respect.

Oppen is thinking of Orpheus here, the poet who failed to rescue his love, the dead Eurydice, to the upper world. To test oneself, Oppen recognized, is to know failure. Oppen's victories are no less great for being small. ■

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Photographs taken 1969
DESCRIPTION
AGE 25, born January 14, 1945, Bronxville, New York
HEIGHT 5'6"
WEIGHT 110 to 125 pounds
BUILD slender
HAIR brown
EYES brown
COMPLEXION fair, freckled
RACE white
NATIONALITY American
OCCUPATIONS: camp counsellor, clerk, secretary
REMARKS: may wear non-tinted glasses, reportedly plays harp and guitar
SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER USED: 005-34-2511
CAUTION
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A Federal warrant was issued on March 17, 1970, at Chicago, Illinois, charging Wilkerson with unlawful interstate flight to avoid prosecution for mob action (Title 18, U. S. Code, Section 1073). A Federal warrant was issued on March 30, 1970, at New York, New York, charging Wilkerson with unlawful interstate flight to avoid prosecution for homicide and possession of dangerous instrument (Title 18, U. S. Code, Section 1073).
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Director
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FBI wanted poster, issued April 1970

Weather Reports

by MAURICE ISSERMAN

One of the shrewdest assessments of the fate of 1960s radicalism was also among the first: Elinor Langer's essay "Notes for Next Time: A Memoir of the 1960s," which appeared in 1973 in the pages of the long-since-defunct radical magazine *Working Papers for a New Society* and was reprinted in a 1989 collection edited by R. David Myers titled *Toward a History of the New Left*. Langer, a writer and teacher active in the civil rights, antiwar and women's movement in the '60s, was dismayed to discover—even as early as 1973—that students who had just missed out on being part of the '60s generation were already in the process of idolizing her "as a relic of some brave revolutionary struggle whose meaning they didn't quite catch—their La Passionaria perhaps." Hoping that in the future '60s radicals would come to be remembered "neither as false

Flying Close to the Sun
My Life and Times as a Weatherman.
By Cathy Wilkerson.
Seven Stories. 422 pp. $26.95.

With the Weathermen
The Personal Journal of a Revolutionary Woman.
By Susan Stern.
Edited by Laura Browder.
Rutgers. 387 pp. $24.95.

Ravens in the Storm
A Personal History of the 1960s Anti-War Movement.
By Carl Oglesby.
Scribner. 336 pp. $25.

Students for a Democratic Society
A Graphic History.
By Harvey Pekar, Paul Buhle and Gary Dumm.
Hill and Wang. 214 pp. $22.

Maurice Isserman was a member of Reed College SDS from the fall of 1968 through the winter of 1969–1970. He teaches history at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, and is the author, with Michael Kazin, of America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s.

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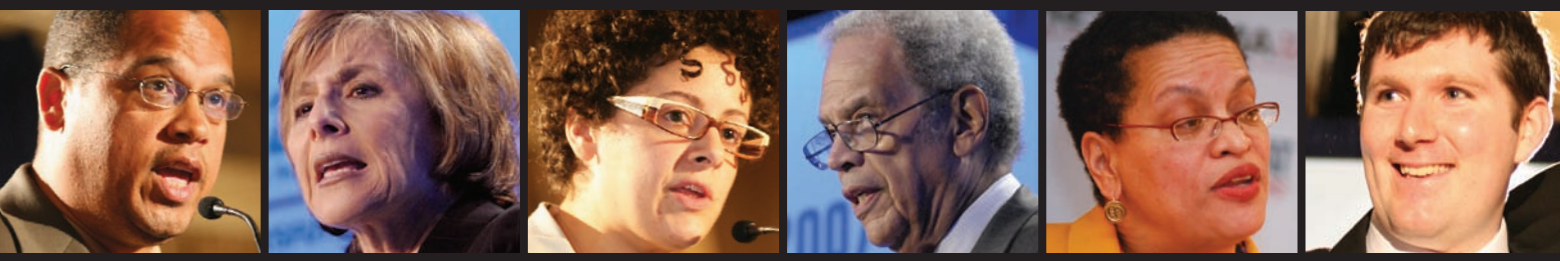

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heroes nor as fallen idols," she reflected in her essay on her generation's political illusions. The fate of the student movement of the 1960s, she argued, was determined when its leaders made the "curiously apolitical" decision to start thinking of themselves as revolutionaries:

> Because revolution was effectively impossible one did not have to dirty one's hands in compromise, nor mingle much with the hoi polloi (meaning: the middle class; the un-Chosen) along the way. And it was also ahistorical and smug, since it mistook revolution, a rare historical event, for a moral choice.

That the New Left "mistook revolution…for a moral choice" is the best one-sentence summary I've ever read of the complexities of late-'60s radicalism. I would suggest a corollary that seems implicit in Langer's essay. The movement's revolutionary turn was not so much a measure of its un- or anti-American character, as conservative critics would have it, but rather an indication that, if anything, the New Left might have been a bit too American for its own good. Its impatience with the half-measures of liberal reformism, its lack of interest in creating a stable constituency or institutional base, and its promotion of a politics of confrontation and risk ("putting your body on the line," as the saying went) revealed the movement as an exotic but recognizable descendant of the powerful Protestant antinomian tradition of radical individualism—one whose adherents defied social custom and religious law to follow the inner promptings of God's voice wherever they might lead. "John Brown is a good symbol for us," Langer noted in passing. "At one point he wanted to run a school for Negroes but he came to find the idea too *small*: he had to attack Harper's Ferry."

The New Left was an exotic but recognizable descendant of the Protestant antinomian tradition.

Cathy Wilkerson's memoir, *Flying Close to the Sun*, offers a compelling cautionary tale of what comes from mistaking revolution for a moral choice. Weatherman was a small but influential faction within Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the largest campus radical group of the '60s. Taking their name from a Bob Dylan lyric, "You don't need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows," the group's leaders proclaimed it the revolutionary duty of white radicals in the United States to come to the aid of brethren revolutionaries in the Third World—including those in the "black colony" at home—through violent and disruptive protest (and, before long, armed struggle). Anything less risky, at a time when Vietnamese peasants by the millions and (as was widely believed) Black Panthers by the dozens were being killed, was a capitulation to the moral failure of "white-skin privilege." Weatherman leaders—the most famous of whom included Bernardine Dohrn, Bill Ayers and Mark Rudd—gained control of SDS in the summer of 1969; by early 1970 they had shut down the organization, taking a few score of the most committed of their followers into the clandestine Weather Underground.

Although never among the top circle of Weatherman leaders, Wilkerson was nonetheless a charismatic presence in her own right. Susan Stern, a member of Weatherman's Seattle collective, met her when they were both in Cook County Jail, following the violent "Days of Rage" demonstration staged by Weatherman in Chicago in October 1969. "Cathy Wilkerson was in my tier," Stern recalled in her 1975 memoir *With the Weathermen* (recently reissued in a new edition ably edited and introduced by Laura Browder). "Tall and slender, the beautiful young woman listened critically but intently as I told her about my life and the progression of events that had led me to Weatherman."

Wilkerson's fame, or rather infamy, was bound up with a single moment five months later, on March 6, 1970, the date of the "Townhouse Explosion." The building in question, on West 11th Street in Greenwich Village, belonged to Wilkerson's father, a well-to-do New York City advertising executive who had no idea that his wayward 25-year-old daughter was using it in his absence as a temporary safe house and bomb factory. While she was upstairs on that March morning incongruously ironing sheets, three of her comrades were in the basement putting the finishing touches on a nail-studded dynamite bomb they intended to plant and set off that night at a dance at Fort Dix in New Jersey. Their desire to "bring the war home" with a homemade anti-personnel weapon outstripped their understanding of electrical circuitry, however, and instead of killing others, Terry Robbins, Ted Gold and Diana Oughton killed themselves. Wilkerson and another survivor, Kathy Boudin, stumbled out of the ruins, shaken but unharmed, and made their escape. Wilkerson spent ten years underground before turning herself in, and she eventually served eleven months in prison for illegal possession of dynamite. Boudin remained underground until 1981, when she was captured in the aftermath of the Brinks armored car robbery in Nanuet, New York, a fiasco that cost the lives of a Brinks guard and two policemen. She was paroled from prison in 2003.

Before Wilkerson became a terrorist, as she recounts in the early chapters of *Flying Close to the Sun*, she had been a Quaker-educated pacifist, a Swarthmore student picketing for civil rights, a reader of Gandhi. She was particularly taken by the lessons to be learned from Gandhi's "struggle to apply his political ideas to the minutest, most personal detail of his life." What came later was not, it should be noted, Gandhi's or the Quakers' fault: the fact that Wilkerson's older sister Ann, coming from the same background and influences, wound up as an American Friends Service Committee staff member at the same time as Cathy was being drawn to Weatherman suggests the wildly different ways such lessons could be applied.

After graduating from Swarthmore in 1966, Wilkerson worked in SDS's national office in Chicago, editing the organization's weekly newspaper, *New Left Notes*. It was a time of great optimism in the student movement: SDS was expanding at an exponential rate (within another two years, the 15,000 members of 1966 would grow to an estimated 100,000 members), yet the organization retained some of the intimacy of the days in the early 1960s when it had only a few hundred members and a few dozen chapters. "I felt like I had landed in a community supportive of both women and men," Wilkerson recalls. "The day-to-day life in the office seemed free of gender stereotypes.… I was being listened to with more respect than I had ever experienced."

There were, by this time, forces chipping away at her earlier pacifist convictions, all part of the familiar narrative of SDS's decline and fall that one can find in histories by Kirkpatrick Sale, Todd Gitlin and James Miller, among other sources. These included a succession of ghetto riots that raised the specter of domestic civil war, the appalling and ever-escalating conflict in Vietnam and the need felt by some SDS leaders to come up with a suitably revolutionary ideology of their own to counter that promoted by the Progressive Labor Party, a Maoist/Stalinist fringe group bent on cap-

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turing SDS for its own purposes. The early '60s sense of the movement as a "beloved community" eroded as a multitude of rival would-be vanguard factions emerged in the SDS leadership. Like many others in SDS trying to make sense of the chaos of the moment, Wilkerson turned to theorists like Régis Debray and Frantz Fanon who celebrated the political and psychological benefits of violence in Third World revolutionary struggles.

One of the virtues of Wilkerson's memoir is that it suggests that her path toward the Townhouse Explosion was by no means predetermined. Her political future, like that of SDS, remained in flux as late as the fall of 1967. At the famous Pentagon protest in October of that year, some SDSers wanted to break away from the main event and skirmish with the police in the streets. Wilkerson was tempted. But in the end she and the others observed the nonviolent discipline advocated by David Dellinger of the National Mobilization Committee. And it worked—the warmakers were confronted on the steps of the Pentagon in a dramatic tableau that redounded to the antiwar movement's appeal on the nation's campuses. Wilkerson was one of those who spoke to the crowd of protesters, urging them not to take unnecessary risks. "While I had been excited by Debray and Fanon," she recalls of that October day forty years ago,

> here in the heat of confrontation it was the model of the nonviolent confrontations of the civil rights movement that seemed most powerful. To the extent we had any power at the Pentagon, which didn't feel like much, it was the power of a moral witness.

Over the next two years, Wilkerson would abandon moral witness, if not a morally charged politics. The urge to take what she describes as "decisive moral action," measured by acceptance of an ever-increasing level of personal risk, crowded out considerations of strategic ends. Young and politically inexperienced undergraduates were swelling SDS's membership at the chapter level: "They weren't looking for a complicated discussion about how to bring about change," Wilkerson notes, "but for validation, for a community, and for a way to express their anger about the war." And they looked to SDS's veteran leaders—which is to say, young people like Wilkerson, only a few years older than themselves—to provide the answers. What they were actually offered by SDS leaders in 1968–69, she writes, was a "lift off from reality."

Wilkerson's self-critical tone stands in marked contrast to that found in another memoir by a Weatherman, Bill Ayers's *Fugitive Days*, published in 2001. As Ayers told a *New York Times* reporter in a soon-to-be-infamous interview published on September 11, 2001, "I don't regret setting bombs. I feel we didn't do enough." Wilkerson, who issued a scathing review in *Z Magazine* of *Fugitive Days* when it appeared, does regret the bombs: the Weather Underground, she writes in her memoir, "accepted the same desanctification of human life practiced by Richard Nixon, Henry Kissinger, and William Westmoreland."

And yet at times, despite the tone of regret that runs as leitmotif throughout the book, she adopts a curious distancing tone. Wilkerson's self-portrait through 1967 (one that accords with the memories of those who knew her at the time) is of a young woman steadily gaining competence and confidence, and emerging as a natural and accomplished leader. SDS had a reputation, not entirely undeserved, as a bastion of male chauvinism; but at critical moments, like the one at the Pentagon, Wilkerson's male comrades unhesitatingly handed the bullhorn over to her (and it is a picture of her, bullhorn in hand, that graces the cover of her memoir). But in describing her actions and beliefs from 1968 on, Wilkerson increasingly characterizes herself as a classic dependent female, the passive follower of initiatives taken by others, incapable of independent judgment and continually surprised by the decisions of her leaders (mostly men, with the exception of Bernardine Dohrn). "When Bernardine declared SDS's mission [in 1968] to be the building of a 'revolutionary movement,'" Wilkerson writes,

> I thought she showed both courage and foresight; if she hadn't explained what she meant, she had, I thought, made a commitment to take on that challenge.... I assumed the details would become clearer as we went along.

In October 1969, when only 300 or so of SDS's 100,000 members responded to Weatherman's call for the Days of Rage action in Chicago, Wilkerson declares that she was astonished when "the march leaders and many others [began] smashing windows of stores and cars as they ran full speed down the street." In contrast, Susan Stern, lower down the chain of command than Wilkerson, notes in her own memoir that she and most of those who showed up for the Days of Rage made sure to wear gloves "to protect the hands from the broken glass that would soon be flying and shattering." And then, in her weirdest act of dissociation, Wilkerson writes of the bomb being built in the basement of her father's townhouse: "I didn't think about the fact that the nails might actually kill people."

Wilkerson attributes her "cult-like" adherence to Weatherman doctrine as a product of the group's "clumsy misuse of religious-psychotherapeutic technique" in its famously brutal "criticism-self-criticism" sessions. Weatherman was a cult, but the crucial question of why some succumbed to its appeal and others did not goes unaddressed in Wilkerson's account. Stern, in contrast, makes it painfully clear that her own self-loathing and self-destructive bent had much to do with her joining Weatherman (she made one suicide attempt as a child, another in her Seattle days and eventually succumbed in 1976 to a combination of drugs and alcohol that may have constituted a final successful attempt). Stern, who privately thought of herself as "Susan Stern Sham" while projecting a miniskirted and leather-jacketed image of tough sexy femininity, confessed in her memoir to being

> obsessed with death and dying.... I fantasized about shootouts with a dozen pigs, killing some of them, and finally getting killed myself.... I had to die with meaning.

It would be psychologically reductive to suggest that all Weatherman's adherents were motivated by similar obsessions (Ayers's book suggests that his problems were rather the opposite of self-loathing). The trouble with *Flying Close to the Sun* is that we get no persuasive explanation for Wilkerson's transformation from the woman who, at age 21, could walk into the office of the nation's largest radical group and without previous experience immediately take over the editing of its weekly newspaper to the woman who, four years later, apparently found it difficult to grasp that a nail-studded dynamite bomb could actually kill people.

Carl Oglesby was not a Weatherman, but as we learn from his memoir *Ravens in the Storm*, he spent a lot of the later 1960s arguing with its leaders, especially with Bernardine Dohrn. Oglesby was elected president of SDS in 1965, much to his surprise. He was 30 years old that year, married, with three children and a job as a technical writer in the defense industry; his profile was hardly that of a typical SDSer. On the other hand, he had educated himself to become a knowledgeable critic of the Vietnam War and had taken part in the first teach-in against the war at the

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University of Michigan. In 1967 he would publish, with Richard Shaull, an extended critique of American foreign policy called *Containment and Change*, one of the most influential texts shaping the politics of the radical wing of the antiwar movement. (Wilkerson, in her memoir, devotes five pages to attesting to its importance.)

Within a few years, Oglesby found himself out of step with the organization he had led from 1965 to 1966. As he wrote in 1969 in "Notes on a Decade Ready for the Dustbin" (also included in R. David Myers's invaluable collection on New Left history), "We are not now free to fight The Revolution except in fantasy." He had no use for those who sought to reduce SDS to a "small, isolated band of super-charged cadre who, knowing they stand shoulder to shoulder with mankind itself…face repression with the inner peace of early Christians" (a pretty good piece of prophetic writing, considering Oglesby composed it months before the Days of Rage). Instead, he wanted SDS to focus on what it was good at: building campus chapters and opposing the war, offering a radical critique of American foreign policy while forming alliances with liberals and even libertarian conservatives, wherever and whenever possible. New Leftists, he thought, "should stop being scared of being reformed out of things to do."

Oglesby thus represents a road not taken by SDS, and I wish I could report that he has written a better memoir about the days in which he argued for that alternative. But since he asks us repeatedly in *Ravens in the Storm* to trust his reconstruction of conversations with Dohrn and others—conversations that took place decades earlier and that spread out over many pages—it is not reassuring to find a text so riddled with obvious errors. He has *New York Times* reporter Harrison Salisbury filing a famous series of articles on the bombing of Hanoi in 1968 (actually 1966) and the Paris Peace Accords adopted in 1975 (actually 1973). He writes that he admired Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver's book *Soul on Ice* when it came out in 1968 but "didn't know yet that his record included several rapes" (crimes that, in fact, Cleaver discusses in the opening chapter of *Soul on Ice*). He has the Weatherman "simultaneously" bombing "eight court houses across the country where movement-related cases were being heard" in October 1969 (they actually bombed two courthouses, a year later.) And so on. The Oglesby legacy is much better served by a re-reading of "Notes on a Decade Ready for the Dustbin."

The last of the wave of new books on SDS is *Students for a Democratic Society: A Graphic History*, a radical comix-inspired work edited by historian and former SDSer Paul Buhle. Buhle is one of the "radical elders" who in 2006 oversaw the launching of a new group claiming the SDS name along with descent from the original. This volume seems intended as a combination recruiting pamphlet and internal education document—and its mixed intent is its principal problem, since it jumbles together genuine history with alluring mythology. I can't quite imagine what an undergraduate today would take away from it, other than a confusing mishmash of contradictory ideas about SDS's role in the 1960s. The opening chapter, "SDS Highlights," written by graphic novelist Harvey Pekar and illustrated by Gary Dumm, offers a good overview of SDS's rise and fall, with an appropriate emphasis on the ever-widening split in the late 1960s between chapter members and the national leadership caste ("Man," an SDSer in one panel complains to another, "the N.O. [National Office] doesn't ask us anything. They go ahead and do what they want"). Progressive Labor and Weatherman come in for well-deserved knocks. But some of the later contributions by other authors seem to take it all back, at least as far as Weatherman is concerned. An entire page is devoted to a poem written in 1970 commemorating Ted Gold, one of Cathy Wilkerson's three comrades who died in the Townhouse Explosion, including the line "he is dead/Of a bomb meant for better targets." Really? Would the "better targets" have been just the soldiers at the dance at Fort Dix, or would they have included their girlfriends and wives as well?

The final chapter, written by Buhle and fellow radical elder and former Weatherman Bruce Rubenstein, is pure recruiting pamphlet. Rubenstein is depicted in the opening panel claiming that the new SDS "is back [and] as strong as it was in 1966"—a dubious proposition both mathematically and politically. Marx famously commented that history repeats itself first as tragedy and then as farce; he never dreamed there would be a further cycle in which it would reappear yet again, even further diminished, as comix. ■

COURTESY AP IMAGES

The Berlin wall is heightened to fifteen feet, September 9, 1961.

Rambling Man

by MARK MAZOWER

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Mark Mazower teaches history at Columbia University. His new book, Hitler's Empire: Nazi Rule in Occupied Europe, *will be published by Penguin later this year.*

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Why Choose Hydroxatone®

PRODUCT	Hydroxatone®	Olay® Regenerist†	Strivectin SD®**
Argireline®§ Acetyl Hexapeptide 3	YES	NO	NO
Matrixyl™ 3000‡	YES	NO	NO
Hyaluronic Acid	YES	NO	NO

THREE Proven Wrinkle-Reducing Ingredients

Hydroxatone® is unlike any other skin cream you've ever tried because it relies on THREE proven ingredients for REAL results. Matrixyl™ 3000‡ is clinically proven to promote collagen production in the skin. Collagen is the most powerful substance known to help keep skin stay young, soft and vibrant. Argireline®§ is a combination of amino acids formulated to relax facial wrinkles, reduce the degree of existing wrinkles and stop their future development. And Hyaluronic Acid is virtually unmatched in hydrating the skin, resulting in increased smoothness, softening, elasticity and decreased facial wrinkles. But Hydroxatone® doesn't stop there! It also includes other natural antioxidants, botanicals, vitamins, and peptides and a gentle but powerful exfoliant...all to nourish your skin while fading wrinkles.

Up To 68% Reduction Of Deep Wrinkles

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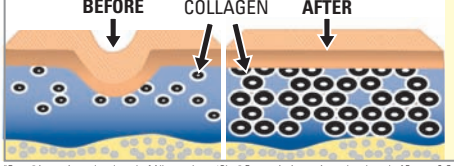

Matrixyl™ 3000‡ – is clinically proven to promote collagen production in the skin.

Argireline®§ – is a combination of amino acids formulated to relax facial wrinkles, reduce the degree of existing wrinkles and stop their future development.

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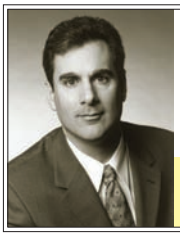
— Robin B., Los Angeles

Results not typical



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Curiosity. All of these motives still get people out of their homes, to be sure, but another, at first sight odder, impulse is perhaps the most characteristically modern of the spurs to travel—the search for the past or its remains embodied in ruins and monuments. Worshiping history rather than faith or art, we make our pilgrimages to Gettysburg and Deerfield, or cross the Atlantic to pay homage at the battlefields of World War I or the hecatombs of World War II. Technology seems to intensify this wanderlust; the more the image proliferates, the greater the hunger for authenticity. But few can have taken the search quite as far as the Dutch journalist Geert Mak does in *In Europe*. The author of a splendid history of Amsterdam—one of the liveliest accounts of a modern city I know—Mak spent the last year of the last millennium crisscrossing Europe in order to see what remained of its most recent and bloodiest century. "I would follow," he tells us, "as far as possible, the course of history, in search of the traces it had left behind."

A blend of travelogue and historical narrative, *In Europe* thus attempts to take the pulse of the continent by retreading the old ground and seeing what—if anything—still stirs beneath. The "course of history" is a convenient fiction, to be sure, but it serves to launch an entertaining series of reflections. As January opens, our Baedeker-toting Dutchman tours the once-glittering bastions of the pre-1914 ancien régime—Amsterdam, Paris, London, Berlin and Vienna. February—the chilly depth of winter—sees him tramp through the mud of Ypres, then on to Cassel, Verdun and Versailles. In the old chateau at Doorn, he looks for the ghost of the kaiser in exile, then catches the spirit of Lenin heading through Stockholm and Helsinki en route to Petrograd. By May, as the weather starts to warm up, he has made it over the Alps to the souvenir sellers in Predappio, Il Duce's birthplace, and then on beyond the Pyrenees to Barcelona and Guernica and the memories of the Spanish Civil War. The result is a sprawling, melancholic ramble in which memoirs, conversations and old-fashioned historical storytelling spring from chance encounters in bars and train carriages and spur authorial comment on the Europe that has been left behind.

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A crane removes the first large chunk from the Berlin wall, December 22, 1989.

As pilgrims know, legendary places vary in their potency. The great cities are too well-known, too dense in their significations, too energetically devoted to the present to lend themselves to quick takes, and Mak's are basically pegs for entertaining stories of the *fin de siècle* and its aftermath. One-line efforts to capture a city's essence rarely come off. To be told that Barcelona is "like a slovenly woman with beautiful eyes" alerts us to the nature of Mak's view of his targets—the urgency of his desire to be seduced by them—but tells us precious little about the city itself. Smaller sites work their more oblique charm—the provincial Austrian graveyard that contains the tomb of a stolid Habsburg customs officer called Alois Hitler, the future Führer's father; the wintry battlefields of the Western Front, where Mak fancies he can "see what they saw." But of course, no place really allows one that; and what Mak is really after is not so much empathy as the emotional charge of some kind—any kind—of connection.

This proves frustratingly difficult to find, for it is exactly what time, ignorance and indifference are making it harder and harder to sustain. Belgian fields still surrender munitions and bones from the Great War, and the authorities still detonate unexploded ordnance the farmers bring them. But the once-frequent tours by veterans and their children are dwindling, and Mak worries how long the emotion of the conflict itself can survive the passing of the generations. In the Russian village where Lenin hid out briefly during the Revolution, the Mercedes of the new rich block the narrow alleys, and nothing records the great man's passage.

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Outside Barcelona, villages abandoned since the Spanish Civil War are now used by the Dutch army to shoot commercials advertising its peacekeeping prowess. Mak's journey turns into a lonely mission as he roams the continent for those few who care as much about the past as he does.

This is not easy. Monuments and memorials proliferated with the mass killings of the passing century, but more often than not they represent a hijacking of human suffering by political elites, and their heavy symbolism is not wearing well. In fact, aside from the curators and site guards who earn their keep from history, Europeans seem increasingly oblivious to the rich heritage of their own experiences. Far from having being turned into a heritage site, the continent seems to be charging absent-mindedly toward a safe if dull future. Sometimes the oblivion is clearly willed, but more often than not it is just that people are distracted, too busy to care. For many, the past belongs in textbooks; once out of school, they do not miss it. In one stopping place after another, Mak finds that the historical markers he expected to be preserved have been allowed to fall into decay and that his search for connection has been thwarted and blocked. Gradually he turns into a latter-day Rip Van Winkle. Wandering through Berlin, his head filled with thoughts of Joseph Roth, Fritz Lang and Kurt Weill, he notes that "one can search long and fruitlessly for the Berlin of the 1920s…for the wild city of Brecht, Lotte Lenya, Erich Kästner, Roth and all the others." Vienna is dead as a provincial village. In Bavaria, lodging at the Hotel Lederer am See overlooking Lake Tagernsee—the very hotel where Hitler and his henchmen arrested the leadership of the SA during the Night of the Long Knives—he finds that "the true sense of living history will not come."

Interestingly, Mak can't decide whether or not this is a good thing. In some places, he is obviously frustrated, but at the Hotel Lederer he doesn't mind: the hotel maids have been smoothing away for so long the evidence of Nazi violence that they have produced a seductive kind of tranquillity. Mak's ambivalence is, I think, shared more widely. His uncertainty about whether history is a burden or a blessing strikes me as characteristic of the mood in much of Europe at present. He approvingly quotes Václav Havel to the effect that nations, like individuals, need a strong sense of identity for their psychic health. But it is not clear how much history helps. After all, Mak recognizes nostalgia as a modern condition, and he does not need to look too far to see how

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pernicious an excessive attachment to one's own sense of the past can be; even as he is on the road in 1999, Europe is still grappling with its most recent war—the last of its bloody century—in Kosovo. Does historical memory facilitate liberation or killing? The answer is surely both.

Mak is no ostrich. As one would expect from such a fair-minded and openhearted observer of the turbulent contemporary Dutch political scene, he has no time for those who think the answer is just turning back the clock. When he meets Amayya Abu-Hanna in Helsinki's main department store—"You'll recognize me right away. I'll be the only person who isn't blond"—he laughs as she reads him the slogans from the spring catalog ("Dress like the rest; after all, don't you have better things to do?"). But he is appalled to learn about the storm that erupted when this dark-haired Arab woman appeared on TV as a newscaster. What Mak mourns is not the vanishing of a more homogeneous society but the creation of one. For alongside his fairly conventional presentation of an unremittingly grim twentieth century, marked chiefly by coups, camps and the devastating impact of man's inhumanity to man, one finds lurking in the margins of his journey a second history emerging—a history of the old rural Europe, of vibrant village life and thriving communities. He has visited this territory before, in the counterpart to his history of Amsterdam—a fine portrayal of a farming world in decline, *Jorwerd: The Death of the Village in Late Twentieth-Century Europe*—and it is the collapse of this world that he now sees all around him. The forces responsible for destroying this are not fascism, communism or the wars they brought; they are instead the same ones that have cut Europeans off from any organic connection with their own historical experiences—capitalism and "Western vacuity" and a "modern age filled only with materialism and a blind faith in all that is new."

Not surprisingly, then, Mak is drawn to those parts of Europe that have resisted, or escaped, being sucked into the vortex of a globalized anonymity. And fortunately, if you know where to look, such places seem to be more common than one might have thought. "Europe," he writes, "is a continent in which one can easily travel back and forth through time. All the different stages of the twentieth century are being lived, or relived, somewhere. Aboard Istanbul's ferries it is always 1948. In Lisbon it is forever 1956.... In Budapest, the young men wear our fathers' faces." This presence of the past seems to linger in Eastern Europe in particular. Watching the mayor scythe the summer grass in the southern Hungarian village of Vásárosbéc, Mak finds it hard to believe he is living in the world of the euro and the Internet. The city center in newly independent Riga offers a shabby simulacrum of Western modernity, thanks to European funding, but slipping past the trendy Café Afrika and down the back alleys past the drunks, our author finds himself back in the world of peeling walls, mud, rotting hay—"scenes straight out of Victor Hugo and Émile Zola."

For Mak's postwar generation, there is something almost magical about the ex-communist East. If it once had the mystique of the forbidden and inaccessible, now it looks like a theme park preserving ways of life that vanished further west around the time of Mak's boy-

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FLORIDA

Engaging Dialogue

■ Deerfield Beach Century Village Progressive Forum hosts speakers weekly. Saturday mornings, 10 AM, at Activities Room next to Le Club. Join us for information and discussion. February 2: Laura Flanders, Air America, "The Media's Distortion of Democracy." February 9: Leonard Weinglass, defense attorney, "The Cuban Five: Legal Lynching." February 16: Lin Chun, London School of Economics, "The Transformation of Chinese Socialism." February 23: Leslie Cagan, director, United for Peace and Justice, "Mobilizing for Peace and Justice." March 1: Brian Foley, Drexel University College of Law, "Nature of US Imperialism." March 8: Lawrence Hamm, Peoples Organization for Progress, Newark, NJ, "Race and Class in Urban Communities." March 15: Joseph Boskin, Boston University history department, "American Life in a Criss-Cross Culture." Directions: enter Century Village west gate by turning east off Powerline between SW 10th Street and Hillsboro Boulevard at West Drive across from Quiet Waters Park. Tell guards you are attending the forum. Two sharp lefts after the guardhouse to T, turn left, park. $3 donation per session. Contact (954) 428-1598.

NEW YORK

Ethics and Character In the US Presidency

■ Is ethical leadership possible in the twenty-first century? The Center for Ethics at Yeshiva University will host a January 30 symposium exploring this question—and many others. Full-day event at the Center for Jewish History, 15 West 16th Street. Participants include *Nation* columnist Eric Alterman as well as Robert Dallek, Ellen Schrecker, Sean Wilentz and Nicholas Lemann. For information and to register, visit www.yu.edu/ethics/reg.asp or call (212) 960-0826.

The Roosevelt Legacy

■ *The Nation* cordially invites scholars and academics attending the Eastern Sociological Society Conference in NYC to attend a symposium and reception on Thursday, February 21, in The Roosevelt Hotel's Grand Ballroom. 5:30–8:30 PM. The panel discussion, chaired by *Nation* publisher and editor Katrina vanden Heuvel, will examine "The Roosevelt Legacy That Might Have Been." Participants include Ira Katznelson, Columbia University; Edwin Amenta, University of California, Irvine; Richard Parker, Harvard University; and Sherle Schwenninger, World Policy Institute. In addition, Charles Bittner, *The Nation*'s academic liaison, will host an exhibit during the conference. Please stop by for a complimentary issue of *The Nation* and for information about our digital archive and various classroom initiatives.

The Immigration Debates: Spotlight on the US-Mexico Border

■ Join New School president Bob Kerrey and a panel of experts in this important discussion on the immigration policy agendas heating up the campaign trail. Panelists include Jorge Bustamante, president of El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, and Emilio Gonzalez, director of US Citizenship and Immigration Services. Wednesday, February 6, 5:30–7 PM. The New School, 66 West 12th Street. Reservations required. More information: www.newschool.edu/img.

The advertising deadline for Events is every Thursday. Rates: $210 for 50 words; $260 for 75 words, additional words (above 75) $2.00 each. To place an ad, call Leigh at (212) 209-5414.

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hood in the 1940s and '50s. Understanding and conveying its beauties is one of the main tasks this book sets itself. Yet Mak does not find it easy to see what is fresh and new about the region, and as he flits from place to place, stopping just long enough to enjoy the local museums and cafes, he retreats at times into cliché, apparently unaware that before him there stretches a long line of Western travelers who have been drawn to the sleeping Orient and lamenting its awakening and its modernization for at least a century and a half. Is it just coincidence that Mak finds the past still alive in those places that are strangest to him? I don't suppose he would really say that in Amsterdam it is always, say, 1935. And for similar reasons, I doubt that an inhabitant of modern Istanbul really finds that its ferries remind him of half a century ago. After all, few cities have changed more over the past few decades than the old Ottoman capital. It is true that across Eastern Europe, the gulf has grown between those groups most able to adjust to the rules of the new game and those—the elderly, the working class, the peasants—who are suffering from the disintegration of the old socialist-era welfare safety net. But perhaps the forces making for change are more powerful and pervasive than they are presented here.

Mak is good company and rarely dull. He has a nice line in anecdote and an amused eye for human foibles. Who would dissent from his desire to rescue history from the curators, the academics and the heritage industry experts, and to inject it with the passion that will win it new devotees? When he spins his own historical narrative, whether in his own words or those of his various eyewitnesses, the story line is mostly a familiar one. But one doesn't read him for that. *In Europe* conveys a sense of a continent on the brink of change, and bracingly challenges the conventional view that Europeans are too wrapped up in their past to move on. In fact, in this telling, it seems rather as if they have made a decision to cement their unity through a largely voluntary act of collective forgetting. Whatever their private memories, they no longer expect or want their political leaders to make capital out of history. Mak, who is as aware as anyone of the multiplicity of pasts that separate Europeans from one another, has reservations about this choice. But as the old haunted places start to lose their power, perhaps this represents a kind of emancipation. It would certainly smooth the way to a solution in Kosovo. Unfortunately, we are not quite there yet. ■

Middlebury

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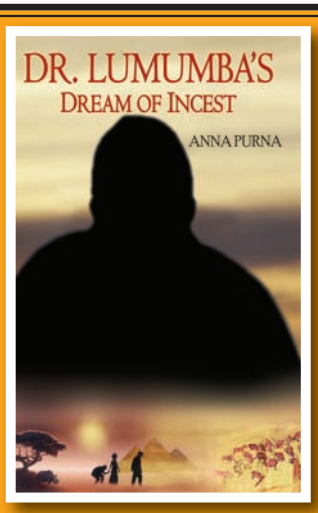

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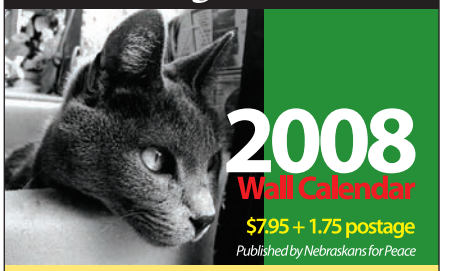
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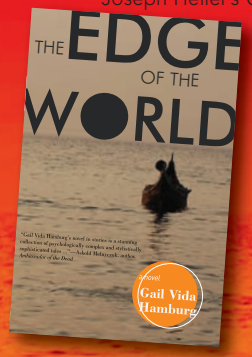

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THE RICHMOND, VA, *Nation* discussion group is seeking new members. Contact Wayne Young, (804) 232-8521, youngwayne88838@aol.com.

A NEW *NATION* UTAH YAHOO GROUP has been created at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/thenationutah. To join contact Sam Evans, (801) 791-8089 or sameritech@yahoo.com.

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WOODLAND HILLS, CA, *NATION* DISCUSSION GROUP. Contact Bailey, (818) 227-0076.

VALDOSTA, GA, *NATION* DISCUSSION GROUP. E-mail Matthew, mateodega@hotmail.com.

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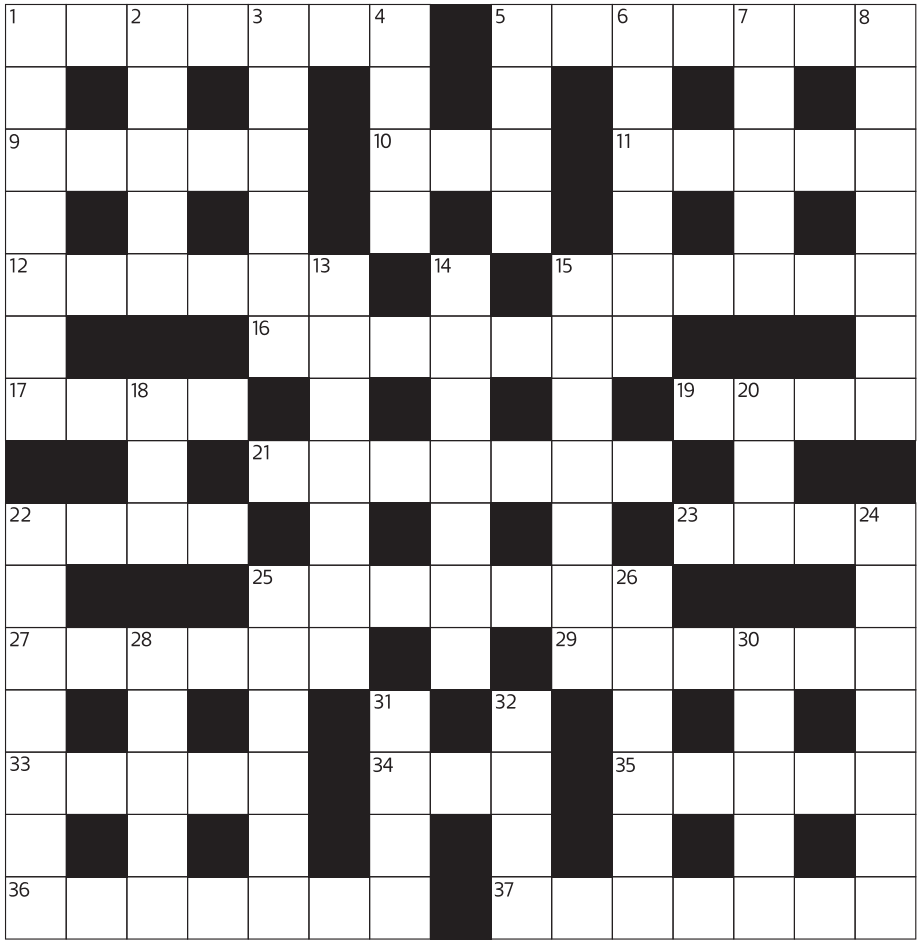

ACROSS

1 Ameliorated, tho' does this in a different way. (7)

5 One may like to hit it, with a giant killer in the kettle. (7)

9, 10 and **19** What Friday said he always was, like an accessory. (5,3,4)

11 The lowest point of the drain, possibly. (5)

12 See 31 down

15 Lo! Opal shards reassembled to reveal the old god! (6)

16 A source of power proves the true sort around the holding area. (7)

17 and **30** down Not the driver of the car, rather what the flier may go on. (9)

19 See 9

21 Stayed away from an empty space of the French backing. (7)

22 A necessity when Eden is no longer what it was. (4)

23 A mark of injury that if taken to the city would be hard to find. (4)

25 A rather good-looking trailer, it is said. (7)

27 Stately and magnificent to the French, with a big blow here. (6)

29 Bi-pedal version of fruit? (6)

33 Outerwear to one might be an animal. (5)

34 For such a long time, one would have to be different. (3)

35 The type of 20 that carries the flag. (Loco, right?) (5)

36 Said to be the words "it might have been." (7)

37 Goes on and on about one, just like Kidd & Co. (7)

DOWN

1 Sat awkwardly on the main problem, which shows staying power. (7)

2 Chose dope perhaps, about a model of it. (5)

3 The stinger of a war plane, responsible for overthrowing the throne. (6)

4 Time to take someone out? (4)

5 In France, I can be found at the openings of Elle, Paris—providing a good choice for a ride over rough terrain. (4)

6 Able to copy something before dinner? (6)

7 Back this, and you'll change the spin. (Paled, by confusion.) (5)

8, 18 and **28** What the entrepreneur hopes to see big with the part-time soldiers, which is a call for military preparedness. (4,3,3,5)

13 Ruin the underwater craft with green. (7)

14 You can't miss seeing such things. (7)

15 Puts something in the pot before getting to eat? (5,2)

18 See 8

20 The car gets wrecked at part of the circle. (3)

22 Fine points when the sun comes up around the cane-break. (7)

24 Drawers in a mess, offered by those who hope to find something here. (7)

25 Hope to see a top on the church? (6)

26 People talk about such flying, but it's a curse in its own right! (6)

28 See 8

30 See 17 across

31 and **12** across Where Columbus hit, being a bit off the mark. (4,6)

32 Cut pointed bits of metal up. (4)

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